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SPENSER
AND THE
FAËRY QUEEN.

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SPENSER

AND THE

F A È R Y Q U E E N .

BY MRS. C. M. KIRKLAND.

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WILEY AND PUTNAM.

1847.

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P R E F A C E .

It has become so much the practice to decry everything in the shape of "Selections," "Beauties," and "Extracts" from the standard authors, that it requires no small degree of courage to offer the public a work which shall come under either of the proscribed classes.

But, with all proper deference for the high authorities who condemn such superficial acquaintance with the best writers, we might yet ask whether something—provided it be good—be not better than nothing? Whether it be indeed wise to renounce all acquaintance with valuable works, because circumstances forbid our studying them thoroughly?

Those who speak with such lofty contempt of any but complete acquaintance with their favorites, are (or should be) persons of elegant acquirements, abundant leisure and ample libraries. There are many people in the world, both young and old, who possess none of these advantages; and we think such will not be wise to allow themselves to be persuaded by their more fortunate advisers, to accept of nothing less than the whole. Scarcely more foolish wou'd be the hungry man who should be induced to refuse a lunch by his neighbor who had already had an excellent dinner.

Various inducements prompted the present attempt to render accessible to American readers a part of the works of a great poet, whose splendid reputation, refined elegance, and high moral tone, entitle him to be studied by all who would become acquainted with English literature. There was reason to believe that to many intelligent persons Spenser was entirely unknown, except by name; and that the antique spelling of the Faëry Queen had proved an insuperable bar to such as had been enterprising enough to attempt exploring its mazes. These reasons, together with a general desire to instil a genuine love for the best poetry, which should induce the young to store their fresh memories with it, as a resource against the tedium which may be the portion of advanced age or of declining health, suggested the idea of selections from the Faëry Queen.

These have been made with especial reference both to subject matter and to poetical merit. Much of the allegory is too subtle and obscure to be made intelligible to the general reader. Some branches of the subject, with the mode in which they are necessarily treated, are better suited to the times of Elizabeth than to our own day. A wide choice was still left; and I have endeavored to avail myself of the poet's abundance, as far as my own taste and the most careful examination enabled me to do so. The first Book, considered by all critics to be the cream of the work, is given nearly entire, and extracts from the others will follow if the present attempt should be successful.

The spelling has been modernized, wherever the rhythm or the rhyme was not materially injured by the change. Where this would have been the case, a few foot-notes have been added. No person who is sufficiently cultivated to

relish the poem at all, will probably find any difficulty in this respect.

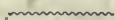
I am particularly concerned to have it understood that in venturing to offer a work of this kind, I am actuated solely by a desire to see Spenser more read in this country, and not by the most remote idea that I could improve upon what has been done. It would require a poet to do justice to Spenser's character—a poet as great as himself to do justice to his poetry. I have not even had access to the fountains of authority, but have been compelled to draw from second-hand sources; and I pretend to offer nothing more than a popular view of the life and character of the master of chivalric romance, with a taste—I hope an exciting one—of his delicious verse. If the result should be as I hope, a further attempt will be made to place a modernized Faëry Queen within the reach of all. The American edition of the complete works of Spenser will still be essential to every American library of any pretension.

C. M. K.



EDMUND SPENSER.

BORN ABOUT 1553—DIED, 1599.



So few and so unsatisfactory are the materials which can be found for a Life of Spenser, that his admirers are obliged to content themselves with such knowledge of his character as may be gathered from his works, his choice of companions—or rather the characters of certain eminent persons who selected him as a companion—and the slight data that ingenious antiquaries have been able to make out from occasional mention of him by those among whom he lived. Men of inferior merit are often found to be solicitous as to their fame—to guard against being overlooked by their contemporaries—to provide for immortality. Shakspeare and Spenser, and men of their order—if such men there have been—in the unconsciousness which distinguishes and exalts them, forget their claims to the reverence of posterity; and while pouring out the riches which it is not possible for them to withhold, sink their own personality as a thing of no moment. They hope for fame indeed; nay, they expect it. The divine gifts which enable them to deserve it have a prophetic power, and assure them of the result. But it is for their works they covet fame, not for themselves. The children of their souls are far dearer to them than their own existence; and it is for their spiritual

offspring that they desire the loving appreciation of the ages come. These are not the men who write memoirs of themselves. They might attempt such things ; but with the account of childhood and early youth—seasons upon which the man looks back with a fond feeling far removed from egotism—the record would cease. The commencement of conscious existence, while the new being is “ trailing clouds of glory ”—seeing a friend in every new face, a pleasure in every new object—has a purity and dignity in the mind’s retrospections. It seems worth remembering. But when ingenuous ardor has been chilled by uncongenial association ; when mortification and disappointment have left their mark in the heart’s most sensitive recesses ; when the treachery of friends, the cruel buffets of fortune, the crushing sense of irrevocable error and immedicable sorrow, have brought by sad steps, the boy to manhood—the man to middle age ;—it is not for the poet, surely not for a poet of Spenser’s class, to expose the dread secret to the vulgar eye. All that he wills the world should know of him, is thrown spontaneously, or rather inevitably, into his works ; if he draws his own picture, it is because he cannot help it. He will not anxiously consult the mirror to throw in flattering touches, and give the performance a graceful frame to fit it for the eye of posterity. Nor can such a man be expected to fill much space in contemporaneous records. Poets are men of retirement—men of few chosen friends, and those of the Boswellian genus ; and it is because they are such, that they are able to leave those enduring works which lead posterity to search so eagerly for personal memorials of the authors.

Who were Spenser’s friends ? By what order of men was he sought ? The gallant, the gentle, the noble, the tender Sidney—Astrophel, of whom it was said—

“ Ne spight it selfe, that all good things doth spill,
Found aught in him that she could say was ill,”

stands first upon the list.* Sidney loved his company, persuaded him to Penshurst with him, where Spenser wrote the "Shepherd's Calendar;" introduced him to his uncle, the magnificent Leicester, and added yet a crowning honor to his spotless fame, by making the poet's fortunes his care, until the fatal wound at Zutphen deprived the age of an ornament, and Spenser of the rare consolation of a spirit worthy to claim kindred with his own. Spenser and Sidney! We love to think of them together at Penshurst; young men of five and twenty or so (for there was

* Sidney seems to have enjoyed a reputation even at his own day, such as no other man of his age ever acquired, at least in sober England. Some have been disposed to question his right to the place he has ever held in the hearts of his countrymen, and of all who speak his language; but Campbell well remarks, "Traits of character will distinguish great men, independent of their pens or their swords. The contemporaries of Sidney knew the man; and foreigners, no less than his own countrymen, seem to have felt from his personal influence and conversation, a homage for him that could only be paid to a commanding intellect guiding the principles of a noble heart." We are tempted to give here a sonnet by Lord Chancellor Thurlow, in which Sidney and Spenser are coupled:—

"ON A PICTURE OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

"The man that looks, sweet Sidney, in thy face
Beholding there love's truest majesty,
And the soft image of departed grace,
Shall fill his mind with magnanimity;
There may he read unfeigned humility:
And golden pity, born of heavenly brood,
Unsullied thoughts of immortality,
And musing virtue, prodigal of blood;
Yes! in this map of what is fair and good,
This glorious index of a heavenly book;
Not seldom, as in youthful years he stood,
Divinest Spenser would admiring look;
And framing thence high wit and pure desire,
Imagined deeds that set the world on fire."

only a year or two's difference in their ages), full of the enthusiasm which foreshadowed their future; *preux chevaliers* both, though with a difference; looking upon life as a theatre of honorable enterprise and splendid achievement; one in soul, though widely separated in fortune. What a field for Sidney's nobleness! and yet, perhaps, still more for that of Spenser; for what requires so much undoubting and generous faith as the receiving of favors? Accepting has fallen into disrepute, from the suspicion which mortifying experience has taught us, that the giver may expect degrading compliances. But if our friend's soul is to us as our own, and we *know* the gift free, we may as well pretend to scrutinize or decline the bounty of Heaven, or to set up a barrier between the right hand and the left, as decline that which he would bestow upon us. We, in our day, regret that Spenser should have been in any degree dependent, even upon Sidney. We have an uneasy fear that his noble friend's power of bestowing what the poet so much needed for quietness of mind and golden leisure, may have derogated from the purity and dignity of their affection. But, setting aside the unerring instinct of oneness between two minds of such tone, the high chivalric spirit of the time, with the deeply felt recognition of difference in rank, took from such dependence its meaner elements. To be the patron of elegant letters was the ambition, not the reluctant duty, of the great man of Spenser's day. Such patronage was the unquestioned resource of men of genius; and the adulation which makes our modern cheeks tingle as we read, was evidently considered only as an elegant way of proving the poet's claim to the favor he sought. Sidney repaid Spenser by praise of equal extravagance and similar tone. Raleigh saw the soul of Petrarch weep (envious tears of course), at sight of the Faëry Queen. Shakspeare was "drown'd in deep delight" at sound of Spenser's verse; and one and all exhausted not only their mother tongue, but all the languages they could command, in heaping superlatives

upon Queen Elizabeth, who was the last to wish a purer taste to prevail. To refuse the most preposterous flattery when Queen Elizabeth expected it, would have been equivalent to hugging poverty for life; and if our sublime (theoretic) virtue is disgusted with the adulatory verses of Spenser to "great Gloriane," we may inquire how many of the first men of the time, the grave and the gay, the Burghleys as well as the Harringtons, he had to keep him in countenance. We may well suppose they could not look at each other without laughing on these occasions; but even now it may be questioned whether there would be many poor and obscure people among us, if flattery were sure to be rewarded in current coin. Shakspeare and Spenser found it so; and, needing money, they paid the price. Shakspeare, in the exquisite picture of the "fair vestal throned in the west," threw a veil of silver mist over the hard-featured spinster, through which, to all time, her red hair will seem golden, and her egotistic coquetry "maiden meditation, fancy-free." If Spenser called her a "goddesse heavenly bright," and a "mirrour of all lovelinesse," perhaps he thought her such; for he had a most creative imagination; and "a lively sense of future favors" probably excited it to the uttermost. And he certainly left her his debtor in the end, since he identified her name with that of the Faëry Queen.

Raleigh was Spenser's next friend after Sidney, and we know of no other man of the time so worthy to succeed Astrophel in his affection. Raleigh had much of the high chivalric spirit which Spenser so worshipped; his soul and his life were full of poetry;*

* Sir Egerton Brydges speaks enthusiastically of Raleigh's poetical powers. "Do I pronounce Raleigh a poet? Not, perhaps, in the judgment of a severe criticism. Raleigh, in his better days, was too much occupied in action to have cultivated all the powers of a poet, which require solitude and a perpetual meditation, and a refinement of sensibility, such as intercourse with business and the world deadens. * * * We have no proof that Raleigh possessed the copious, vivid and creative powers

he was himself fit to be a hero of romance; and he had a brotherly, unenvying admiration for Spenser's genius, which must have been as delightful as it was honorable to both. He introduced Spenser to the Queen, and in such a sort, that she gave the poet a pension of fifty pounds, and the laureateship, though without its title. The "Shepherd of the Ocean" endeavored to persuade Spenser to remain and try his fortune at court; to bask as he did, in the smiles of high-born dames, and trust his fortunes to the ticklish chances of great men's favor. Spenser seems to have submitted for a time, and we may imagine the gentle poet, with his elegant taste, his delicacy, his high-soaring imagination, teeming even then with the magnificent conceptions which afterwards found birth in the Faëry Queen,—among the waiting crowd which swayed to and fro, like reeds in the wind, as Elizabeth turned her mighty regards on one side or the other,—subject to the insolence of courtiers who had been taught to regard gorgeous apparel as the measure of dignity, and feeling, in all its bitterness, what he so well expressed in one of his satires—

"Whoever leaves sweet home, when mean* estate
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
Finds all things needful for contentment meek,
And will to court for shadows vain to seek,
Or hope to gain, himself will a daw try :†
That curse, God send unto mine enemy !

He had noble countenance enough, for his friends were the of Spenser; nor is it probable that any cultivation would have brought forth fruit equally rich. But even in the careless fragments now presented to the reader (in Raleigh's collected poems), I think we can perceive some traits of attraction which, perhaps, even Spenser wanted. If less diversified than that gifted bard, he would, I think, have been sometimes more forcible and sublime. His images would have been more gigantic, his reflections more daring."

* *Mean*—middling.

† *Try*, for *prove*.

lights of the court, and he had abundant examples of genius waiting even then for the favor of its inferiors ; yet all his writings bear witness to his detestation of the position in which he found himself at court, where, in spite of his gentleness, the all-powerfull and vindictive Burghley had become, for some trifling offence, his determined enemy ; even so far, say some, as the withholding or preventing the payment of the pension with which the Queen had honored him. Spenser seems to have made desperate efforts to propitiate the hard old lord, but in vain ; and he left the court in disgust, flying back to his Irish estate, by the soft-flowing Mulla, where the Muses visited him more freely, and where Raleigh loved to meet them in his company. The poet vented his vexation and disappointment in those oft-quoted lines :—

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide :
To lose good days, that might be better spent ;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow ;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peer's ;
To have thy asking, yet wait many years ;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares ;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs ;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run ;
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
Unhappy wight, born to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend ! ”

Another of Spenser's intimate friends was Gabriel Harvey, one of the learned men of the time, though too much of a pedant to admire the Faëry Queen. This acquaintance was made at college, where Spenser began to give promise of his after years, by an unusual devotion to study, and a scrupulous morality of conduct such as ever after honorably distinguished him. Some poems which appeared about that time have been ascribed to

him, from their almost identical resemblance to his after works. Though this is the only testimony of his claim to them, we can easily believe such a mind to have been, even thus early, full of the god, and unable to repress sparkles of the inward fire which was destined to blaze forth so gloriously in his maturity. Gabriel Harvey seems to have been ever his firm friend; and we have reason to rejoice that Spenser's love for the learned doctor did not induce him to listen to his criticisms. Harvey, who is cruelly ridiculed as a pretentious poetaster by Nash and others, boasted of having introduced hexameters into English poetry; and as the Faëry Queen was not written in hexameters, he naturally thought it but a lumbering affair, and attempted to discourage Spenser from going on with it. He preferred the "Nine Comedies," which the world seems to have let die, perhaps willingly.

We know not whether Sir John Harrington, the witty godson of Queen Elizabeth, ought to be ranked among the intimate friends of Spenser; but there is every reason to believe that the translator of Ariosto must have been among his chosen companions. Literary men, in those comparatively early times, were evidently united by a strong bond, independent of all outward circumstances. The numerous collections of poems contributed by different hands, and emanating from persons of every rank in life, show that a brotherhood in taste and genius was willingly confessed by those whom fortune had honored with her high places. The "Mirrour for Magistrates," the "Paradise of daynty Devises," the "Gorgeous gallery of Gallant Inventions," the "Handeful of pleasant Delights," and many other collections, are the works of authors of noble and ignoble name indiscriminately; and this is justly considered a striking feature of the time, and a proof of the high estimation in which letters were held in the learned and gallant court of the maiden queen. We would also consider it a charming proof of the ennobling power of literature, which was able thus to set aside outward distinctions at a period

when these distinctions had a value never yet surpassed. Men like Sidney, Raleigh, and Southampton, lived two distinct and separate lives—one in court and camp, the other in the bowers of the Muses; and however they may have valued the honors gained in the more earthly course, they prided themselves far higher on those which they were able to win when poets and philosophers were their only competitors. Harrington was one of this fraternity, and of a kindred tone with Spenser, as we may well judge by his selection of an Italian poet who had so evidently been one of the inspirers of the bard of Faëry. We have something more than conjecture on this point too; for when the “Art of English Poetry” was attracting much attention, and exciting many conjectures as to its authorship, Spenser having been named among those to whom it was ascribed, the fact that Sir John Harrington had censured the book, was considered proof that Spenser did not write it—which plainly implies warm personal friendship on the part of so sharp a critic as Harrington. We are the more willing to set Sir John’s name in the list of Spenser’s friends, since he was evidently honest as well as witty, and as good a man as so good a courtier could be; while his passion for literature made him the proper companion of him who wrote the “Tears of the Muses,” and other complaints of the too sparing honor paid, even at that day, to these inspiring deities.

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, whose favorite titles of honor were “servant to Queen Elizabeth, counsellor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney”—a climax that gives us a key to his character,—was of about the same age with Spenser and Sidney; and as he was a poet and a man of learning and worth, we may safely rank him among Spenser’s friends, especially as he was a noted Mæcenās of that day. He it was who wrote home to England the beautiful incident of Sidney’s relinquishing the cup of water to the dying soldier, and who said of Sidney that “his wit and understanding *beat upon his heart*, to make himself

and others, not in word or opinion, but in life and action, good and great."

Leicester, the man whom Sidney dared not defend, was rather the patron than the friend of Spenser. There could have been no congeniality between them, but Leicester chose to complete the circle of his boundless magnificence by becoming the foster-father of this great "babe of Fame." He had taste enough to appreciate Spenser, and he invited him into his house, for the purpose, it is supposed, of employing him to illustrate the genealogy of the noble house of Dudley. The poet, poor, and hoping for better things, appears to have set himself about this work in earnest, and to have prided himself not a little upon the able performance of it. It was in Latin, but whether in prose or verse is uncertain. Upon the completion of the *Stemmata Dudleiana*, Leicester procured for Spenser the post of secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, then Irish Viceroy; and the result showed that though "of imagination all compact," business was not "the contradiction of his fate." Upon Lord Grey's recall, not without loud blame for certain severities against the Irish rebels, his secretary wrote a vindication of his conduct, as keen, as independent, and as convincing, as he could have expected from the most subservient and interested official. This bold defence of a man under a cloud, at a time when clouds were very apt to bring thunder, has a characteristic nobleness in it. It was worthy of him who chose the personification of magnanimity for his hero.

Another friend of Spenser, always mentioned by him in his letters to Harvey and others as E. K., has been supposed, on slight grounds, to be a certain Edward Kerke; but with greater reason these initials are considered a *sobriquet* of the poet himself, who could, under this disguise, communicate to the public many things requisite for the full understanding of his poetry, which he could not have openly stated in his own name; while it permitted him to leave whatever he chose, unexplained or indistinctly de-

clared. When we consider the many meanings that have been supposed to be hidden under the allegory of the Faëry Queen, it seems probable enough that Spenser would resort to some plan of the kind for explaining what he desired the world should understand, while he kept the esoteric meaning to himself and a few chosen friends. The commendations bestowed by E. K. upon the new poet, "uncouth and unkissed, unknown to most men, and regarded but of a few," do indeed tell somewhat against this supposition; but we must excuse him if, in endeavoring to make friends for his work, fondly prized, yet of such "darke conceit" that he might well fear ordinary readers would be discouraged from threading its mazes, he ventured beyond the bounds of his natural modesty, under the protection of an incognito. At least this view seems liable to as few objections as that which supposes one intimate friend and one only, to have been mentioned throughout Spenser's correspondence, by his initials alone. The idea is, however, considered inadmissible by some critics, and one has ascribed the commentaries of E. K. to Gabriel Harvey, not without much plausibility.

As to his birth, Spenser was a Londoner, and 1553 is conjectured to have been the year which brought into the world him who is called the "Sunrise," as Chaucer had been denominated the "Day-starre," of English poetry. Spenser's claims cannot be appreciated unless we bear in mind that no poet of decided merit had appeared in England for nearly two hundred years. The "Vision of Piers Ploughman" is a work of spirit and originality; Lydgate, Hawes, Surrey, Sackville, and Sidney, not to mention names of lesser note, had produced melodious verses in great abundance. Sir Philip Sidney's Euphuistic prose-poem, the *Arcadia*, excited much attention in its day, and remains a wonder of misdirected genius even now; yet all these might fall into oblivion without sensibly impoverishing English literature. Chaucer, and after him Spenser, are the only names, anterior to

Shakspeare, which we still continue to place among all that ranks highest in the productions of genius. Their works form an integral part of our mental possessions, the precious treasure of both hemispheres. They were the worthy precursors of Shakspeare and Milton, and must be considered as every way deserving of the studious acquaintance of all who speak the language whose power and richness they demonstrated. Edmund Spenser claimed kindred with the noble houses of Marlborough and Spenser ; and however coldly that proud stock may have viewed his pretensions during his life, before time had sealed his fame, its descendants would now doubtless count the honor more than reciprocated if the relationship could be proved. Indeed it is supposed that even in the haughty court of the Amazonian Queen, a sovereign to whom no man spoke without kneeling—a lesson no doubt well practised elsewhere by those who were obliged to submit to it in the presence—the poet was allowed to claim “ some private bands of affinity ” with the Lady Strange, the daughter of Sir John Spenser, of Althorp, to whom he had dedicated his “ Tears of the Muses.” It was for the same lady, born under a happy star, that Milton long afterwards wrote his “ Arcades,” which was performed at Harefield Place by her grandchildren. And it was for the son of her second husband, Lord Brackley, afterwards Earl of Bridgewater, that the *Comus* was written. One is almost disposed to envy the high birth which can command or persuade genius after this fashion. The dedication to Lady Strange is dated 1591 ; *Comus* in 1634 ; the *Arcades* perhaps a little later.

Spenser took his degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts at Cambridge, in 1573 and 1576 ; and two or three years afterwards we find him domesticated with Sidney, to whom he was introduced by Gabriel Harvey ; and then with Leicester, to whose notice he had been brought by his noble friend. In 1579 he seems to have been on the point of seeking his further fortune abroad, under the patronage of the Earl of Leicester ; and wrote

valedictories to his friends, in which he bewails his hard fate in being thus obliged to pursue in distant lands the fortune he could not attain at home. But this trial was probably spared him, as he makes no allusion to having visited foreign countries, and we find him again writing from London to Harvey, only a few months after his round of farewells. Perhaps it was for the sake of the Irish secretaryship that Leicester retained him ; in which case we could almost regret that the journey to the Continent had not taken place. Yet the appointment looked like the making of the poet's fortune ; and it was not long in leading to still further advancement. In March, 1581, he was made Clerk to the Irish Court of Chancery ; and in the same year received a highly profitable grant from the Queen, of a piece of property in the county of Wexford—the Abbey of Enniscorthy—with the attached castle and manor, still in possession of the Earls of Portsmouth. In 1586, a further grant of 3028 acres of land, in the county of Cork, made the poet comparatively rich, and fixed his residence in Ireland, in consequence of certain conditions attached to the grant. This was the last favor he received through means of the beloved Sidney, who died of his wounds in October of that year, and was honored with a regal funeral at the expense of the Queen, and a far more enduring memorial in the heart of his country.

Kilcolman Castle, at which the poet was now to reside, was situated on an elevation, on the north side of a fine lake, in the midst of an extensive plain, whose horizon was made picturesque by distant mountains. The views about this spot—hallowed by the birth of the Faëry Queen—are still charming, though less richly wooded than they must have been in Spenser's time. The river Mulla, celebrated in his deathless verse, flowed close beside the dwelling ; and here Spenser delighted to wander, in the congenial society of the romantic Raleigh, drinking in the sweet influences of the scene. Retired leisure, profound tranquillity,

prospects which might have warmed into life an imagination less powerful than his, and the encouraging praise of one who was himself no stepson of the muse, contributed to enhance the beauty and glory of Spenser's conceptions, and to bring to perfect development that splendid procession of images, which, under less happy circumstances, might have been forced into fragments, or perverted into the mere *concetti* so fashionable at the time. The "tears and the smiles" of the soft climate of Ireland; the delicious green of her woods and fields; the far-famed clearness of her romantic lakes, are all mirrored in the poet's "lond of faërie;" and they will receive no higher honor till the end of time.

The three first books were published in 1590, and it was at that time, when a highly accomplished age was taken by surprise on the appearance of the new light, that Raleigh would fain have persuaded Spenser to make the most of the sunshine of royal and courtly favor. His confidence in his own power with the Sovereign was then at its height; and he thought his gay cloak would serve to smoothe his friend's path as well as his own. But after trying "the hell in suing long to bide," the poet wisely preferred his rural seclusion to the servility and foppery of Elizabeth's court.

We may conceive his sentiments to have been such as those prettily expressed by one of his contemporaries—Robert Greene—one who shone until he was eclipsed by far greater lights:

"Sweet are the thoughts that savor of content,
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown;
Such sweet content, such mind, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy when princes oft do miss.

"The homely house that harbors quiet rest,
The cottage that affords nor pride nor care,
The mean that 'grees with country music best,
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare,

Obscuréd life sets down a type of bliss ;
A mind content both crown and kingdom is."

Or we might borrow a stanza from Lodge, a poet born only three years after Spenser, and who had the honor of suggesting to Shakspeare the plot of "As You Like It."

" Time hath been that I have longed
 (Foolish I, to like of folly),
To converse where honor thronged,
 To my pleasures linked wholly :
Now I see, and, seeing, sorrow
 That the day consum'd, returns not ;
Who dare trust upon to-morrow,
 When nor time nor life sojourns not ?"

He left behind the frowns of Burghley, the ensnaring influence of Leicester, and the eternal round of emblematic pageants—which must have seemed to the poet a horrible travestie or mockery of his own cherished dreams—and returned to his shades, not lonely, for there bloomed and smiled his own lovely and beloved Elizabeth, whom he calls, in his seventy-fourth Sonnet,

" My love, my life's last ornament,
By whom my spirit out of dust was rais'd,"—

and whom he enrolled as a fourth Grace, long after, in the poem which was to secure immortality for both :

" So far as doth the daughter of the day
All other lesser lights in light excel ;
So far doth she in beautiful array
Above all other lasses bear the bell ;
Nor less in virtue that beseems her well
Doth she exceed the rest of all her race ;
For which the graces, that here wont to dwell,
Have for more honor brought her to this place,
And gracéd her so much to be another grace.

Another grace she well deserves to be,
In whom so many graces gathered are,
Excelling much the mean of her degree ;
Divine resemblance, beauty sovereign rare,
Firm chastity, that spite not blemish dare !
All which she with such courtesy doth grace,
That all her peers cannot with her compare."

'This fair Elizabeth was not the poet's first love, though she was his best. He, like Romeo, had had a Rosaline, or Rosalind, who proved either false or cruel, but who was, nevertheless, the occasion of some exquisite poetry. He extolled her charms, complained of her coldness, and bewailed her falsehood, in such strains as make us not sorry that poets can love and be disappointed like other men. We imbibe from his verses an unfavorable idea of the beauteous Rosalind ; yet it is scarcely fair to accept without reservation all that a poet may be tempted to say in such a case. The power of saying it well may be the principal reason for saying it at all. At any rate the lady is at disadvantage, since she cannot expect to make her defence as attractive as the accusation. All we can know with certainty is, that Spenser failed in obtaining the object which first awakened his heart—a fate in which he was not without abundance of that companionship which misery is said to love. We are, however, consoled by believing that his next attachment was more happy, whether more wisely placed or not ; and that this happier love does not seem to have lacked true poetic elements, nor the married life of the gentle poet the charm which springs from respect as a heightener of affection. The "Epithalamion," which he wrote on his own marriage, is among his most exquisite productions. It has been considered the most beautiful nuptial song in the language ; and "classic Hallam" calls it "a strain redolent of a bridegroom's joy, and of a poet's fancy." We wish we could tell our youthful readers that this bridal song was written when the poet was five-and-twenty ; we

fear they will frown to be reminded that, at the time of his marriage, Spenser had seen eight lustres, as we learn from his sixtieth sonnet :

“ Since the wingéd god his planet clear
Began in me to move, one year is spent :
The which doth longer unto me appear
Than *all those forty* which my life out-went .
Then, by that count, which lovers’ books invent,
The sphere of Cupid forty years contains,
Which I have wasted in long languishment,
That seem’d the longer for my greater pains.”

But poets are always young ; and all that made the love of Spenser precious above that of other men was now in the perfection of triumph. He had been recognized by his country ; hailed by her best minds as an equal, if not a superior ; rewarded by his sovereign with a liberality which we, who have become accustomed to see literature judged worthy of the highest honors, can scarcely appreciate ; and with his power still at its height, and about to accomplish further developments, his character for virtue and kindness unsurpassed, and his subjection to the tender passion unsparingly demonstrated, she must have been an anomaly among women who would have inquired into the baptismal register before she consented to share the heart, and abide by the fortunes of “ Britain’s Orpheus.” We have reason to believe that all the virtuous Elizabeth found cause to regret in this marriage was the shortness of its duration.

Three books of the poem which will make Spenser’s name co-eval with the language, were published in 1590, with the title of “ The Faëry Queen, disposed into twelve bookes, fashioning XII. morall vertues,”—and it was said to be intended to represent those virtues as each having “ a knight to be the patron (example) and defender of the same, in whose actions, feats of arms and chivalry, the operation of that virtue whereof he is the protector, are to be

expressed ; and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same to be beaten down and overcome.” This splendid opening, which Spenser never surpassed or even equalled, introduced to a learned and romantic court by the acknowledged guides of literary taste, took at once its indisputable rank among the poetry of England. Spenser’s star shot to the zenith, and scarcely paled its fires when Shakspeare’s followed it. “The Faëry Queen,” says Hallam, “became at once the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every scholar.” The author, not unconscious of merit, but unspoiled by applause, returned to his castle in fairy-haunted Ireland, and encouraged anew the poetic impulse. “The XII. morall vertues” still stimulated his imagination ; but he turned aside to honor the memory and lament the loss of Sidney. The collection of elegiac poems denominated “Astrophel,” bespeak a true mourning, though expressed in the quaint and formal taste of the day. Such verses as this, however, belong to the nature of all ages :

“ Was never eye did see that face,
 Was never ear did hear that tongue,
 Was never mind did mind his grace,
 That ever thought the travel long ;
 But eyes and ears, and every thought
 Were with his sweet perfections caught.”

“Daphnaida,” an Elegy on the daughter of Henry, Lord Howard, appeared in 1591, in which year also, Ponsonby, the bookseller of the Faëry Queen, published a collection of minor pieces, all that he could find of Spenser’s, to catch the breeze of public favor—and Astrophel, and “Colin Clout’s come Home Again”—an account of the poet’s visit to England, given under feigned names—appeared in 1595. In the latter year appeared also the “Amoretti,” or Sonnets, inspired by the fortunate Elizabeth, who is thus described in one of them :

“Fair is my love, when her fair golden hairs
With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark ;
Fair, when the rose in her red cheeks appears ;
Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark ;
Fair, when her breast, like a rich laden bark
With precious merchandize she forth doth lay ;
Fair, when that cloud of pride, which oft doth dark
Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away ;
But fairest she, when so she doth display
The gate with pearls and rubies richly dight ;
Through which her words so wise do make their way,
To bear the message of her gentle spright ;
The rest be works of Nature’s wonderment ;
But this the work of heart’s astonishment.”

In 1596, were published the fourth, fifth, and sixth books of the Faëry Queen, with a reprint of the first three. Six books, then, comprise all that we have of the legends of the twelve moral virtues and their knights ; if we except the two imperfect cantos of “Mutabilitie,” which are considered a fragment of the lost “Legend of Constancie.”

Some ascribe this imperfect condition of the great poem, as compared with the original design, to an accident which occurred in the course of Spenser’s hasty return to England in 1598, on occasion of the breaking out of troubles in Ireland. The estate granted him by the crown, formed part of the forfeited possessions of the Earls of Desmond. The titular heir of that family headed a body of insurgents who attempted to expel the English from Ireland, and Kilcolman castle naturally became a point of attack. Spenser and his family fled ; and such was the haste and disorder of this unhappy flight from a home of peace and love, that one of the poet’s children is reported to have been left behind, and burned in the house, which was fired by the insurgents. Some have believed that the remaining six books of the Faëry Queen were lost in the confusion of wretchedness ; but

this idea is not sanctioned by the best authorities, who consider it more probable that the work never was completed by its author. Judging by the time occupied in the composition of the first six books, the period allowed is quite too short for the completion of six more. The fourth, fifth, and sixth books are confessedly inferior to the original three; and it is thence concluded that the poet found the subject, as planned, too heavy for him; and wisely forbore to attempt the entire development of an allegory which, judging by what we have, would have stretched out almost to the "crack of doom,"* wearying the reader in proportion as it overtasked the writer.† Spenser, with all his dignified sense of power, was a modest man, not likely to overrate his own ability; and with taste equal to the strength of his imagination, he was as little likely to be blind to the falling off observable in the poem. He would naturally note the period when labor began to take the place of impulse; and, the Queen being his first great effort, he would not probably overrate his creations, as did Milton, when self-esteem had been fed to the uttermost by the transcendant merit of the work on which he had expended the flower of his strength. These, and other considerations, added to the entire lack of testimony as to the existence of more of the poem than we now possess, are deemed conclusive as to its having been completed beyond the sixth book.

A few sad words will now conclude this unsatisfactory account of the third name in English literature. The disastrous flight from Ireland, the poverty which ensued upon the loss of the Irish property, and, above all, the death of the child by so dreadful

* One *Canto* of the Faëry Queen is as long as some books of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*; one *Book* therefore, consisting of twelve cantos, is as large as an ordinary epic.

† Sir John Stradling says, however, that part of Spenser's MSS. were burnt, and the "Legend of Constancie" was actually published in 1609, as a part of those which had been saved.

an accident, would seem to have been too much for the sensitive heart of the poet. Some have imagined him as suffering the extreme of destitution after his return to London, but this seems impossible. Where was Gabriel Harvey? Where Raleigh, who, though grasping, was generous too? And Essex who gave him a splendid funeral, and appeared at it himself as a mourner? Spenser must have lived at least a year in London, and these and other friends must have been acquainted with his condition. His pension of fifty pounds was larger than it seems to us now, and he had done nothing to forfeit the favor of the queen, but much to glorify her reign. We will not, therefore, adopt the painful suggestion that Spenser's fate resembled that of so many poets, in the penurious misery of its close. There is no hint of his having been accused of prodigality; his life was characterized by a high and pure morality, and no student of his character and works can doubt that as a husband and father the poet gave way to the man. We choose, therefore, the more tolerable belief that his "poverty" was only such as contrasted with the comfort and abundance of his beloved home; his misery the loss of that home, and the sight of the dear ones on whose account he had chiefly prized it. Yet we fear his premature death must be ascribed to the wrench from so much that he loved, the interruption of his darling occupations, and the sense that the world was to be begun anew for the support of those so dear to him, acting upon a heart too finely strung to endure the rude blasts of fortune. So says the concurrent voice of authority and tradition, and we must receive the truth, mournful as it is. To one who was born and lived a poet, in the highest and most comprehensive sense of the term, we must not look for stoical or even practical philosophy.

He died, not as "a shock of corn fully ripe," but like the rich grain storm-blasted. His remains were laid in Westminster Abbey, and near those of "Father Chaucer," it is said at

his own request. Poets bore the pall that covered him, and threw into the grave tributary verses with the pens that wrote them. The noble Essex appeared as chief mourner, and we love his memory for the comely act. England's best and fairest wept for the romantic poet. He was not unappreciated during his life; but at his death he was ranked among the true-born sons of heaven.

Thirty years after his death, Anne, Countess of Dorset, erected a monument to his memory. Queen Elizabeth is said to have ordered one, but some envious soul—not Burghley, for he died a year before the poet—intercepted the intended benignity. Browne, in “Britannia's Pastorals,” ascribes the failure to “curst avarice” of some “factor” employed by the Queen, and tells us the tribute was to have been

“A pyramis, whose head, like wingéd fame,
Should pierce the clouds, yea, seem the stars to kiss;”

and he curses bitterly the wretch who “robbed our Colin of his monument.” The countess's monument was defaced during the civil wars, and restored to its present condition, at the expense of Pembroke College, in 1778. The inscription, which was at first in Latin, calls Spenser “*facile princeps*” of the poets of his time. The English one which replaced this when the tablet was restored, declares that his divine spirit needs no other witness than the works which he left behind him; an opinion in which we of this age heartily concur, believing that no poet ever left more evident testimony of his love for virtue and religion, and his desire that all men should be persuaded to be “holy, and just, and true,” as the best and only means of happiness.

It has been well said of Milton, who owned Spenser for a master in art, that his “genius had angelic wings, and fed on manna,” and we may say as much of Spenser, however he may

differ in tone from the sterner poet. With imagination and fancy almost boundless, his reverence for goodness,—not heathen but Christian goodness,—reigns paramount; and his verse performs the highest office of poetry—that of making virtue attractive, by showing that it is truly its own exceeding great reward.

In person, Spenser was small and delicate, and in his dress precise, as became a man of taste. His face, well known from several portraits, has all the sweetness and delicacy that we require as accordant with the tone of his poetry. The mild, almond-shaped eye, brow slightly elevated, the mouth compressed just enough to suggest the idea that there was felt some need of patience, give an impression of dreamy repose not without pensiveness. The forehead is lofty, but less expanded than that of Shakspeare or Milton; and the whole countenance indicative more of an exalted tone than of great force of character. This aspect is in accordance with the fact that Spenser enjoyed a universal good-will scarcely compatible with any decided strength of determination, or pursuit of objects in which other men might be competitors. This good-will is abundantly proved in many ways; but chiefly by a complete exemption from satire, although the most unbridled satire was the fashion of the day, and Spenser's most intimate friend, Gabriel Harvey, was pursued even to premature grey hairs by the malice of Nash. Considering the praise that was lavished upon Spenser by the best judges of the times, who compared him with Homer, and indeed went to the most extravagant lengths in contriving modes of encomium, we must ascribe the total silence of the tongue of satire, which dared even to attack Shakspeare himself, to a peculiar gentleness in Spenser's nature which softened all men's hearts towards him. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again."

(As to the exalted moral character and tendency of the writings of Spenser, there has been but one voice from his own day to the

present. Milton calls him "Our sage, serious Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas," and this sentiment has been echoed, in some form or other, by all who have given an opinion on the subject. Equally uniform has been the testimony to the dazzling splendor of Spenser's genius, which, for originality and grandeur of conception, has been placed by the first critics in the same rank with that of Homer, Dante and Shakspeare. Homer created a mythology, but his gods, like his men, were "of the earth, earthy." Dante showed new worlds of horror and of light, but tyrannical or vindictive human passions reigned paramount in both, too often leaving impressions of disgust rather than pleasure. The tone of Spenser's poetry is unworldly, abstracted, contemplative, in the highest degree; conversant ever with high themes, however lowly and simple the images used to illustrate them; touching the deepest strings of the universal heart, to bring out such sweet and tender music as is to be found only there; making plain the things which belong unto our peace, by the light of no "common day." His grace and delicacy may be called superhuman, so completely do they seem to belong to a sphere above ours. The creative poetic faculty so abounded in him, that his successors in art have gone to him as to a fountain. Cowley and Dryden delighted to acknowledge their obligations to him, and hosts of inferior poets have imitated him without acknowledgment. He is peculiarly the poet of poets, as Charles Lamb called him, and who better qualified than Lamb to characterize "Faërie Spenser?" Leigh Hunt, another enthusiast in the art of arts, says, "Spenser's great characteristic is poetic luxury. If you go to him for a story, you will be disappointed; if for a style classical or concise, the point is conceded; if for pathos, you must weep for personages half real and too beautiful; if for mirth, you must laugh out of good breeding, and because it pleaseth the great sequestered man to be facetious. But if you love poetry well enough to

enjoy it for its own sake, let no evil reports of its 'allegory' deter you from his acquaintance, for great will be your loss. His allegory itself is but one part allegory and nine parts beauty and enjoyment; sometimes an excess of flesh and blood. * * He is more luxurious than Ariosto or Tasso, more haunted with the presence of beauty. His wholesale poetical belief, mixing up all creeds and mythologies, but with less violence, resembles that of Dante and Boccaccio; and it gives the compound the better warrant in the more agreeable impression. * * Spenser is the farthest removed from the ordinary cares and haunts of the world of all the poets that ever wrote, except, perhaps, Ovid; and this, which is the reason why mere men of business and the world do not like him, constitutes his most bewitching charm with the poetical. * * * When you are 'o'er informed' with thought and passion in Shakspeare; when Milton's mighty grandeurs oppress you, or are found mixed with painful absurdities; or when the world is vexatious and tiresome, and you have had enough of your own vanities or struggles in it, or when 'house and land' themselves are 'gone and spent,' and your riches must lie in the regions of the 'unknown,' then Spenser is 'most excellent.' Take him, in short, for what he is, whether greater or less than his fellows, the poetical faculty is abundantly and beautifully predominant in him above every other, though he had passion and thought, and plenty of ethics, and was as learned a man as Ben Jonson, perhaps as Milton himself."* We might quote corresponding testimony to any amount, for the language has been exhausted in praising Spenser.

Yet he is comparatively little read. These almost idolatrous encomiums proceed mostly from men who are themselves largely endowed with "the vision and the faculty divine," which they so

reverence in him. Common readers of modern poetry know little of Spenser, and seek to know no further. There is a notion of difficulty or obscurity connected with the idea of the Faëry Queen, which deters many from attempting to read it. This arises first, and principally, from the antique words and capricious or obsolete spelling, and next from the allegory, the very name of which alarms the indolent and superficial reader. The great length of the poem is undoubtedly another bugbear; but the want of a perfectly continuous plan, which forms an objection with the critics, should here serve to relieve the fears of the reader, since each Book of the Faëry Queen is complete within itself, and there cannot, therefore, be even the shadow of a compulsion to read at a sitting some thirty or forty thousand lines.

➤ The air of difficulty given to Spenser's poetry by the antique spelling, with the introduction of some words which were considered somewhat affected even in the poet's own day, is a still more potent barrier to a large class of readers. The committing to memory of some *two dozen words* would scatter this cloud entirely, as one resolute blow with the sword of Orlando did away with all the terrible phantoms of the enchanted forest; so trifling in reality, is that which seems at first glance so formidable. It is, perhaps, a little remarkable that Spenser should have been an exception to the general plan of modernizing all the spelling of his times. Shakspeare would have presented nearly as many difficulties, if his editors had felt the same delicacy; and the English of James's time would have left the Scriptures almost a sealed book to ordinary readers, if succeeding editions had not conformed to the spelling of their day. The immense number of Spenser's rhymes may probably account for a reluctance to new-model his orthography, since in any case many words must necessarily be left unchanged. Perhaps, however, a still more operative reason has been the stress which the poet, or his friends for him, laid upon this very feature of his poem. The solemnity

with which the subject is treated affects one somewhat as did Shakspere's curse, on whoever might move his bones, those whose curiosity would else have violated the grave without scruple. E. K., who spoke for Spenser, to say the least, treats the subject thus: "To speak of the words, I grant they be something hard, and of most men unused; yet both English, and also used of most excellent authors and most famous poets. * * * * For though, among other faults, it specially be objected of Valla against Livy, and of others against Sallust, that with over much study they affect antiquity, as coveting thereby credence and honor of elder years, yet I am of opinion, and eke the best learned are of the like, that those ancient solemn words are a great ornament both in the one and in the other; the one laboring to set forth in his work an eternal image of antiquity, and the other carefully discoursing matters of gravity and importance. For, if my memory fail not, Tully, in that book wherein he endeavoreth to set forth the pattern of a perfect orator, saith that oftentimes an ancient word maketh the style seem grave, and, as it were, reverend, no otherwise than we honor and reverence grey hairs for a certain religious regard which we have of old age. Yet neither everywhere must old words be stuffed in, nor the common dialect and manner of speaking be so corrupted thereby, that, as in old buildings, it seem disorderly and ruinous. But, all as in most exquisite pictures, they use to blaze and portrait not only the dainty lineaments of beauty, but also round about it to shadow the rude thickets and craggy cliffs; that, by the baseness of such parts, more excellency may accrue to the principal. For oftentimes we find ourselves, I know not how, singularly delighted with the show of such natural rudeness, and take great pleasure in that disorderly order; even so do those rough and harsh terms enlumine and make more clearly to appear the brightness of brave and glorious words; so oftentimes a discord in music, maketh a comely concordance."

Whether the author of the laborious essay, of which we have here given but a part, was Gabriel Harvey, or Spenser himself, or some person who is destined to remain unknown, these were certainly the sentiments of the poet. He was an amateur in language. He studied it artistically, with a view to the perfecting of his poetry, as a painter acquaints himself with the mode of preparing his colors, that he may use them to better advantage. Our only apology for venturing to touch what is thus hallowed, is the desire for a more general appreciation of the author. Words that are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," must not remain enclosed in a curious ancient casket, inaccessible without a key. The riches of Spenser belong now to all who speak the English tongue, and we are induced to offer a peep, by the hope that our readers will be seized with a miser's eagerness to possess themselves of the whole.

As to the allegory, it is indeed of such intricacy that even the learned in criticism have failed to find a competent clue to its mazes. But the peculiar merits of the poem have, in truth, little or nothing to do with the allegory. If we might offer a little practical advice, it would be to read the Faëry Queen first without any of those attempts at explanation which are apt to chill one's natural pleasure; to become thoroughly familiar with the poetry, as such; and *afterwards* to seek a new form of enjoyment in research and ingenious conjecture, for which a wide field of verification is open in the mass of writings of authors of the time, and mountains of commentary piled up since. Everybody has heard Hazlitt's saying about the Faëry Queen, that "some persons look at the allegory as if they thought it would bite them—as a child looks at a painted dragon, and thinks it will strangle him in its shining folds. This is very idle. If they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them. Without minding it, the whole is as plain as a pike-staff." This is as true as it is plain-spoken; yet, for the benefit of those

who may still doubt, we must endeavor to give a slight sketch of the plan of the Faëry Queen.

In the first place, the scene of the poem is independent of all time and space.) The poet creates, not only his characters, but the very ground they stand on. He has nothing to do with either History or Geography; the whole world of imagination is his theatre of action.* So absolute is his power, and so comprehensive his skill, that he takes his readers with him, and makes them creators too. They must see with his mind's eye, and imbibe some touch of his spirit, before they are capable of accompanying him; but when once the relation is established, he carries them away irresistibly, like a true enchanter.

✓ The Red Cross Knight is presented in the poem as "Holiness," or the perfection of the spiritual man in religion.) He is accompanied and excited to good deeds by Una or Truth—one of the loveliest of all poetic creations—whose voice encourages him to the extirpation of Error, a hideous monster with brood innumerable. He defeats "Sansföy," or Faithless, yet falls for a time into the snares of Duessa—Deceit or Doubleness. He is betrayed into the castle of Orgoglio, or Pride (*Orgueil, Fr.*). Archimago or Hypocrisy, the enchanter, is the instrument of Deceit, and does her bidding. Arthur, or Magnanimity, the knight by whose lofty and disinterested daring the Red Cross Knight is liberated, is the personification of the spirit and essence of pure chivalry, whose duty it was to redress all wrongs whatsoever, without fee or reward, save the proud consciousness of high desert. Gloriana, who is often mentioned throughout the poem, is the Glory sought by every true knight, and she is also, flatteringly, made to stand as the representative of Queen Elizabeth, whom Spenser condescended to propitiate by adulation. Spenser says, in his letter to Raleigh, speaking of the "dark conceit" of the Faëry Queen, "I devise that the Faëry Queen kept her annual feast

* Coleridge.

twelve days ; upon which twelve several days the occasions of the twelve several adventures happened ; which, being undertaken by twelve several knights, are in these twelve books handled and discoursed.”* Thus, of the three first books, the first contains the adventures of the Red Cross Knight, or *Holiness* ; the second, those of Sir Guyon, the representative of Temperance ; the third, of Britomartis, a lady-knight—a sort of British *Clorinda* or *Bradamante*—in whom is pictured stern and saintly Chastity. These three books all critics agree in considering the most exquisite of the whole. They have an unsurpassable delicacy and grace—an Arcadian elegance and simplicity, almost unmatched in the language—indeed hardly approached by any author but Shakspeare. They will scarce bear the least abridgment, upon any principle of selection. The first book, in particular, we have felt constrained to give nearly unbroken. It affords æsthetic study for a life-time, if we contemplate it *à la* Schlegel. Raphael, and Claude, and a host of their glorious brethren, might have exhausted their genius worthily in drawing from it.† Sermons innumerable might be preached from its heavenly texts ; rules of life to satisfy the most rigid moralist enrich its every page. If it be treason for goodness to show itself unlovely, it is, on the other hand, transcendently worthy to show that true loveliness consists in goodness. The abstract idea of Truth will be ever more attractive to one who has learned to contemplate it under the divine figure of *Una* ; *Holi-*

* “The Faëry Queen,” says Prof. Wilson, “is to be considered as a gothic, not a classical poem. As a gothic poem, it derives its method, as well as the other characters of its composition, from the established modes and ideas of chivalry. Now, in the days of knight-errantry, at great annual feasts, throngs of knights and barons bold assembled, and thence sallied forth to succor the distressed—the noblest of all characters being that of deliverers. Such feasts were held for twelve days.”

† See “A Gallery of Pictures from Spenser,” in Hunt’s “Imagination and Fancy.”

ness seems within hope when we see it not incompatible with some touch of kindred human weakness in the Red Cross Knight.

“Will was his guide, and grief led him astray—”

and again, he was “too simple and too true,” like other children of light, and so not always proof against the wiles of the wicked. And

“Oftentimes he quak’d, and fainted oftentimes,”

even as we, “frail, feeble, fleshly wights,” are sure to do, let our hope be ever so strongly placed. The sweetest, most devoted, most child-like spirit of love and gratitude to Heaven was never more unostentatiously inculcated, and unconsciously exhibited, than in the general tone as well as many distinct passages of this delicious poem. Take a specimen or two, even though we should give them again in their place in our selections :

“And is there care in Heav’n ? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move ?
There is :—else much more wretched were the case
Of man than beasts : but oh ! th’ exceeding grace
Of Highest God that loves his creatures so,
And all his works with mercy doth embrace
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man—to serve his wicked foe !

“How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succor us that succor want !
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant
Against foul fiends to aid us militant !
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward
And their bright squadrons round about us plant ;
And all for love and nothing for reward !
Oh why should heavenly God to man have such regard !”

And again :

“ Ay me ! how many perils do enfold
 The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
 Wer't not that heavenly grace doth him uphold
 And steadfast Truth acquit him out of all !
 Her love is firm, her care continual,
 So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
 Or weakness, is to sinful bands made thrall.”

This sweetness is not, however, exclusive of strength, when occasion offers for stirring the passions, and calling up the keenest sympathies. The genius of picture, rather than of passion, has been said to pervade the Faëry Queen ; but, to our thinking, this sweeping opinion is unjust to Spenser. He was a man deeply concerned in the affairs of life ; a man of friendship, of love, of sorrow, of disappointment ; not a pale, stoical student, a dealer in abstractions, a builder up of castles at once imposing and impalpable. He was a true man ; the blood in his rich veins was warm with the sympathies of humanity ; and to us his poetry, imaginative as it is, is full-fraught with all this wealth of feeling and experience. His pictures have ever the charm of human interest. Even the perfect Una is as true a woman as if she had owned all the follies of her sex. When she has found—or thinks she has found—her knight again, is she only picturesque ?

“ His lovely words her seemed due recompense
 Of all her pass'd pains ; one loving hour
 For many years of sorrow can dispense ;
 A drachm of sweet is worth a pound of sour !
 She has forgot how many a woful stour
 For him she late endured ; she speaks no more
 Of past ; true is that true love hath no power
 To looken back ; his eyes be fixed before.
 Before her stands her knight, for whom she toiled so sore.”

Gorgeous pictures there are, in such lavish ^{new} profusion, such

splendor of coloring, such infinite minuteness of detail, that we seem to see them through an atmosphere preternaturally transparent, or to be endowed with eyes magically anointed, to enable us to see so much more than words ever brought to our view before.) But in this enchanted panorama, beneath these shades which are not cast by the common garish sun, we discern, through all disguises of allegory, chivalry, magic, and fantastic romance, real men and women, with bosoms warmed by the same hopes, and fears, and wishes that agitate our own; their cheeks suffused with blushes, and their hearts beating visibly under the influence of Love; their hands grasping the sword at the approach of injury or insult. Even the personages most purely allegorical seem to us just like their other selves now walking among us. Gluttony, with his "eyes swollen with fatness," and his neck (long, for the better tasting),

"With which he swallow'd up excessive feast
For want whereof poor people oft did pine—"

is as plainly a man, as many a seeker of turtle feasts, "in shape and life more like a monster than a man," whom we have all seen; and Avarice, that "scarce good morsel all his life did taste," though "child nor living kinsman had he none" to inherit his hoards, is no more an abstraction than some we could name, who live and look just like him. When Pride comes forth "with princely pace," and

"The heaps of people, thronging in the hall,
Do ride each other, upon her to gaze,"

we look upon something more than a picture. We can detect, in the rolling of her haughty eye, the look which pretends indifference, but which is secretly watching on all sides to ascertain that no "pepper-corn of praise" be wanting; and we perceive that she takes her airing more for the sake of exhibiting her state, than to be

“ With pleasure of the breathing fields yfed—”

exactly as her flesh-and-blood kindred do at this very day.

As for strength, it is acknowledged that nothing in Dante exceeds the personification of Despair, of Fear, of Care, and of Mammon, in the Faery Queen. In all these unsurpassed delineations there is an intensity of implied invective, without a tinge of that bitter temper from which our better nature revolts. The greatest detestation for what is false and wrong is excited, without even a suspicion that a personal feeling has prompted the poet's indignation. Yet there is not the coldness of mere abstraction. We are interested in these creations because they seem to partake of our own humanity. They show us the ghastly and terrific image of what conscience teaches us we ourselves should be if we gave full scope to the evil part of our nature, and what the results upon others of such indulgence. We see our own faults, commonly, as we see our faces in a convex mirror—softened by diminution into a delicate harmony, and looking almost beautiful in miniature. Spenser shows us the same things, as a concave glass gives back every speck and blemish and unhappy expression, magnified, yet not untrue,—exaggerated, but by that means more easily studied. Perhaps the indulgence of baleful passions looks ever thus to the angels and pure intelligences who mourn over the miseries we invoke by our own wilful folly.

The humanity, so to speak—of the Faery Queen, is proved by its suggestiveness. We are often betrayed into reverie—carried off into far experience or still more distant anticipation—by our sympathy with the actors in the scene. We see the picture, but we see much more. The poet's accessories are perfect; but we supply, from our own spiritual world, and in proportion to our power of appreciation, a thousand subtle links which serve to bring us into communication with the imaginary world before us, airy spirits ascending and descending upon this electric ladder,

until a complete unison is attained, and the poet's brilliant idealizing assumes the dignity of fact, and our own matter-of-fact existence is exalted into poetry.

The fourth Book of the Faëry Queen exhibits the ideal of Friendship in the adventures of Cambel and Triamond; the fifth of Justice, exemplified by Artegall, who is attended by Talus, an iron man, typical of unswerving and executive Law. The sixth Book tells of Sir Calidore, or Courtesy—

“ Beloved over all,
In whom it seems that gentleness of spirit
And manners mild were planted natural;
To which he, adding comely guise withal,
And gracious speech, did steal men's hearts away.”

Each of these knights has a mission of his own to fulfil, and all with the general object of serving “great Gloriane,” the Faëry Queen; but other than this general purpose their several trains of adventure have little connection. One character, however, appears in every book, and was undoubtedly intended by the poet at the outset as the hero, *par excellence*, of the whole action. This is Prince Arthur, or Magnanimity, who is set forth as an embodiment of all the moral virtues, and who has a part, more or less important, assigned him in each of the several actions. Herein lies the great objection made by the critics to the conduct of the poem, and arguments pro and con have been multiplied to little purpose. Nothing can be plainer than that the subject, as at first conceived by Spenser, was, when treated with that luxurious diffuseness which seems the inevitable result of such fulness as his, entirely too immense for management; and that the unities, which a poet of more scanty genius might have observed even to frigidity, melted away in the glow of an imagination too fervid to suffer compression in a mould however beautiful. A sufficient apology for the disregard of those rules which have been framed by means of the writings of such poets

as Spenser, is found in the fact that each book of the Faëry Queen is an epic within its own bounds, so that the appearance of Arthur in all is gratuitous. "Spenser," says Warton, "did not live in an age of planning. His poetry is the careless exuberance of a warm imagination and a strong sensibility. It was his business to engage the fancy and to interest the attention by bold and striking images, in the formation and the disposition of which little labor or art was applied. The various and the marvellous were the chief sources of delight. Here we find our author ransacking alike the regions of reality and romance, of truth and fiction, to find the proper decorations and furniture of his fairy structure." Born in such an age, Spenser wrote rapidly from his own feelings, which, at the same time, were naturally noble. Exactness, in his poem, would have been like the cornice which a painter introduced in the grotto of Calypso. Spenser's beauties are like the flowers in Paradise,

Which not nice art,
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon,
Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, or where the unpierced shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers." * * *

In reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, the reader is transported.

The Knights of the Virtues are throughout engaged not so much in mere feats of strength, and actions whose leading motive is fame, like those of Ariosto's heroes, as in revenging injuries and doing justice, aiding the weak, and consoling the distressed. In the first book, for instance, "a king's daughter applies to a knight with a request that he would relieve her father and mother, who are closely confined to their castle upon account of a vast and terrible dragon that had ravaged their country, and perpetually laid wait to destroy them. The knight sets forward with the

lady, encounters a monster in the way, is plotted against by an enchanter, and, after surmounting a variety of difficulties and obstacles, arrives at the country which is the scene of the dragon's devastation ; kills him, and is presented to the king and queen whom he has just delivered, marries their daughter, but is soon obliged to leave her, on account of fulfilling a vow.”*

This first book we propose to give, as a temptation to explore the whole poem ; and although we cannot deny that, as a whole, this Book is more perfect in its excellence than the rest, yet it contains no passages of greater splendor than may be found in the other Books. If encouraged by the reception of the present attempt, we shall offer some account of these, with specimens of their beauty, any one of which would make the fortune of a modern poem.

It is not for us to point out the faults of Spenser ; we must leave that office to the critics. Faults he has, doubtless ; but we agree with Mr. Hunt in thinking that “ his genius not only makes amends for all, but overlays them and makes them beautiful with ‘ riches fineless.’ ” His faults are the faults of his age ; his book reflects his age—not its manners, but its spirit. The prose writings of that day exhibit everywhere abundant proof that quaintness and prolixity, verbal pedantry and inflated phraseology, were in fashion. Philological studies were almost exclusively confined to the learned languages, to the great neglect of the cultivation of the English tongue. The ardor for classical erudition was so prevalent among the learned and the great, that the mythology as well as the diction of the ancients became fashionable. The amusements and even the furniture of the opulent, their shows and masques, the hangings and the tapestries of their houses, and their very cookery, assumed an erudite, and what would now be termed a pedantic, cast. “ Everything,” says Warton, speaking

* Warton's Observations on the Faëry Queen.

of this era, "was tinctured with ancient history and mythology. When the queen paraded through a country town, almost every pageant was a pantheon. When she paid a visit at the house of any of her nobility, at entering the hall she was saluted by the Penates, and conducted to her chamber by Mercury. Even the pastry-cooks were expert mythologists. At dinner, select transformations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were exhibited in confectionary: and the splendid icing of an immense historic plum-cake was embossed with a delicious basso-relievo of the destruction of Troy. In the afternoon, when she condescended to walk in the garden, the lake was covered with Tritons and Nereids; the pages of the family were converted into wood-nymphs, who peeped from every bower: and the footmen gambolled over the lawns in the figure of satyrs." Queen Elizabeth herself was a most learned person. She wrote a commentary on Plato, translated many works from both Greek and Latin, wrote many Latin letters and many English original works, and spoke five languages with facility. The Italian language nearly rivalled the ancients in popularity, and the English was loaded with translations from it. Shakspeare did not disdain to draw inspiration from it, and Spenser was evidently fascinated by its romantic elegance, though his exquisite taste prevented his adopting its quaint conceits to an extent very injurious to his own poetry. He was in advance of his age here. He says, through his friend "E. K.:" "Poetry is no art, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct, not to be gotten by labor and learning, but adorned with both: and poured into the wit by a certain *Enthusiasmos* and celestial inspiration."

Perhaps the most fashionable English book of Spenser's day was Lilly's "*Euphues*," a tissue of antithesis and alliteration—full of "fit phrases, pithy sentences, and gallant tropes" in the opinion of the court, who considered it a proof of refined manners to adopt its phraseology. "That beautie in court who could not parley *Euphuisme*," was as little regarded as she who now cannot

speaking French. This foppery is shown up in Sir Walter Scott's novel of "The Monastery," where a court-gallant calls the cows "the milky mothers of the herd," and the youth who tends them "most bucolical juvenal," with many other like paraphrases—not unfair specimens of what was considered elegant in Spenser's day.

Another form of affectation was ridiculed by Sir Philip Sidney, under the character of Rombus, a village schoolmaster. It consisted of an incessant interlarding of conversation and writing with Latin quotations and Latinized words and phrases, as thus: "Now the thunder-thumping Jove transfused his dotes into your excellent formositie, which have with your resplendent beams thus segregated the enmity of these rural animals. I am, Potentissima Domina, a school-master,—yet hath not the pulchritude of my virtues protected me from the contaminating hands of these Plebeians; for coming solummodo to have parted their sanguinnolent fray, they yielded me no more reverence than if I had been some Pecorious Asinus," &c. So we may see what Spenser avoided, when we are disposed to find fault with him for quaintness or pedantry.

It remains for us only to give specimens of the opinions of those better able to judge of Spenser and his works. The author of "Shakspeare and his Times," to which we have been much indebted in the course of our imperfect sketch, says of the Faëry Queen: "One peculiar and endearing characteristic of the poem is the exquisite tenderness which pervades it. It is impossible, indeed, to read it without being in love with the author—without being persuaded that the utmost sweetness of disposition, and the purest sincerity and goodness of heart distinguished him who thus delighted to unfold the kindest feelings of our nature; and whose language, by its singular simplicity and energy, seems to breathe the very stamp and force of truth. How grateful is it to record that the personal conduct of the bard corresponded with

the impression resulting from his works ; that gentleness, humility, and piety, were the leading features of his life, as they still are the most delightful characteristics of his poetry."

From the opinions of men of genius of our own day, we shall quote that of Mr. S. C. Hall. "Edmund Spenser possessed the abstract faculty of poetry in a higher degree than any other poet of England.. He occupies, in common with three other illustrious men, the first rank of poetical fame in his country ; but in the truest sense of the word poetry, he stands before all, unapproachably alone. * * * Himself a man of action, his poetry is the expression of perfect luxuriousness and relaxation ; of a fairy land of voluptuous sentiment and fancy, where the pathos that is there does not act with tears, and the passion and strength that are there also, influence us through a medium of visionary sublimity, and by associations of preternatural power. The controlling presence of the poetry of Spenser is a love of beauty and a sense of pleasure. We have them equally in his description of a lonely solitude or of a scene of more than eastern magnificence : in his picture of a withered old man in a cave, or of the wanton beauties of an enchanted lake. Spenser's imagination is inexhaustible, and his language the most copious and various. And though his genius is, as we have said, steeped in pleasure, all it sends forth may rank in the very first order of refinement and moral truth."

Professor Wilson, in a much admired series of papers in Blackwood, says, "Nature made him her almoner, and he flung the pearls of poetry, as morning drops her dews, before all human feet, and bade all—men and women, boys and girls—go a Maying. * * Looking into his own mind, more superbly furnished even than the Cave of Mammon in the Faëry Queen, for there he saw the pomp and prodigality of heaven, his eyes were dazzled with the surpassing brightness of the present, or soothed with milder glories in long array, mellowing away on both sides

of the Enchanted Vale, while towers and temples, stately as the architecture of the skies, closed up, as with a sunset, Imagination's vista. * * * His words have a lambent light. Reading him is like gazing on the starry skies—or on the skies without a star—except perhaps one—the evening star—and all the rest of Heaven in still possession of the moon.”

For ourselves we know nothing that expresses our feelings about him better than some of the verses of Shelley to a brother poet—the Skylark.

“ With a soul as strong as a mountain river,
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver.”

These two for instance :—

“ What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

“ Higher still, and higher,
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”



THE FIRST BOOK
OF
THE FAËRY QUEEN.

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSS, OR OF HOLINESS.*

CANTO I.

The patron of true Holiness
Foul Error doth defeat;
Hypocrisy him to entrap,
Doth to his home entreat.

I.

A GENTLE knight was pricking on the plain,
All clad in mighty arms and silver shield,
Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,
The cruel marks of many a bloody field;
Yet arms till that time did he never wield:
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdainng to the curb to yield:
Full jolly knight he seem'd, and fair did sit,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit.

* In Canto X. the Red Cross Knight is explained to be St. George.

II.

And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
The dear remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd ;
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sovereign hope, which in his help he had.
Right faithful true he was in deed and word ;
But of his cheer did seem too solemn sad ;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.*

III.

Upon a great adventure he was bound,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave
(That greatest glorious Queen of Faëry lond),
To win him worship, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave
And ever as he rode, his heart did yearn
To prove his puissance in battle brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learn ;
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stern.

IV.

A lovely lady rode him fair beside,
Upon a lowly ass more white than snow ;
Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide
Under a veil, that wimpled† was full low ;
And over all a black stole she did throw,
As one that inly mourn'd ; so was she sad,
And heavy sat upon her palfrey slow ;
Seemed in her heart some hidden care she had ;
And by her in a line a milk-white lamb she lad.

* *Ydrad*, dreaded.† *Wimpled*, brought over the face.

V.

So pure and innocent, as that same lamb,
She was in life and every virtuous lore,
And by descent from royal lineage came
Of ancient kings and queens, that had of yore
Their sceptres stretcht from east to western shore,
And all the world in their subjection held ;
Till that infernal fiend with foul uproar
Forwasted all their land, and them expel'd ;
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compell'd.

VI.

Behind her far away a dwarf did lag,
That lazy seem'd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his back. Thus as they past,
The day with clouds was sudden overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storm of rain
Did pour into his lemans lap so fast,
That every wight to shroud it did constrain ;
And this fair couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII.

Enforst to seek some covert nigh at hand,
A shady grove not far away they spied,
That promis'd aid the tempest to withstand ;
Whose lofty trees, all clad with summers pride
Did spread so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not pierceable with power of any star ;
And all within were paths and alleys wide,
With footing worn, and leading inward far :
Fair harbor that them seems ; so in they entred are.

VIII.

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,
 Joying to hear the birds sweet harmony,
 Which therein shrouded from the tempest dread,
 Seem'd in their song to scorn the cruel sky.
 Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,
 The sailing pine ; the cedar proud and tall :
 The vine-prop elm ; the poplar never dry ;
 The builder oak, sole king of forests all ;
 The aspen good for staves ; the cypress funeral ;*

IX.

The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
 And poets sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;
 The willow, worn of forlorn paramours ;
 The yew, obedient to the benders will ;
 The birch for shafts ; the sallow for the mill ;
 The myrrhe sweet-bleeding in the bitter wound ;
 The warlike beech ; the ash for nothing ill ;
 The fruitful olive ; and the platane round ;
 The carver holm ; the maple, seldom inward sound.

X.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
 Untill the blustering storm is overblown ;
 When, weening† to return, whence they did stray,
 They cannot find that path, which first was shown,
 But wander to and fro in ways unknown,
 Furthest from end then, when they nearest ween,
 That makes them doubt their wits be not their own,
 So many paths, so many turnings seen,
 That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been.

* This descriptive enumeration of trees is imitated from Chaucer

† *Weening*, thinking.

XI.

At last resolving forward still to fare,
 Till that some end they find, or in or out,
 That path they take, that beaten seem'd most bare,
 And like to lead the labyrinth about;
 Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
 At length it brought them to a hollow cave
 Amid the thickest woods. The champion stout
 Eftsoons dismounted from his courser brave,
 And to the dwarf awhile his needless spear he gave.

XII.

"Be well aware," quoth then that lady mild,
 "Lest sudden mischief ye too rash provoke:
 The danger hid, the place unknown and wild,
 Breeds dreadful doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
 And peril without show; therefore your stroke,
 Sir Knight, with-hold, till further trial made."
 "Ah, Lady," said he, "shame were to revoke
 The forward footing for an hidden shade:
 Virtue gives her self light through darkness for to wade."

XIII.

"Yea, but," quoth she, "the peril of this place
 I better wot than you: Though now too late
 To wish you back return with foul disgrace,
 Yet wisdom warns, whilst foot is in the gate,*
 To stay the step, ere forced to retrate.—
 This is the Wandring Wood, this Error's Den,
 A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:—
 Therefore I read† beware." "Fly, fly," quoth then
 The fearful dwarf; "this is no place for living men."

* Gate, way.

† Read, advise.

XIV.

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
 The youthful knight could not for ought be staid ;
 But forth unto the darksome hole he went,
 And looked in : his glistring armor made
 A litle glooming light, much like a shade ;
 By which he saw the ugly monster plain,
 Half like a serpent horribly display'd,
 But th' other half did womans shape retain,
 Most loathsome, filthy, foul, and full of vile disdain.

Here follows a stanza descriptive of Error, but omitted on account of the coarseness of the terms. The same may be said of several stanzas omitted in this canto. The subject is of itself an unpleasing one, and as such unsuited to our purpose.

* * * * *

XVI.

Their dam upstart out of her den afraid,
 And rushed forth, hurling her hideous tail
 About her cursed head ; whose folds display'd
 Were stretcht now forth at length without entrail.*
 She look'd about, and seeing one in mail,
 Armed to point, sought back to turn again ;
 For light she hated as the deadly bale,
 Ay wont in desert darkness to remain,
 Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plain.

XVII.

Which when the valiant Elf† perceiv'd, he leapt
 As lion fierce upon the flying prey,
 And with his trenchant blade her boldly kept
 From turning back, and forced her to stay :

* *Entrail*, intermixture.

† *Elf*, fairy.

Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
 And turning fierce her speckled tail advanc'd
 Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay;
 Who, nought aghast, his mighty hand enhanc'd;
 The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glanc'd.

XVIII.

Much daunted with that dint her sense was daz'd;
 Yet kindling rage her self she gathered round,
 And all at once her beastly body rais'd
 With doubled forces high above the ground:
 Then, wrapping up her wreathed stern around,
 Leapt fierce upon his shield, and her huge train
 All suddenly about his body wound,
 That hand or foot to stir he strove in vain.
 God help the man so wrapt in Error's endless train!

XIX.

His lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
 Cried out, "Now, now, Sir Knight, shew what ye be;
 - Add faith unto your force, and be not faint;
 - Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee."
 That when he heard, in great perplexity
 His gall did grate for grief and high disdain;
 And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
 Wherewith he gript her gorge with so great pain,
 That soon to loose her wicked bands did her constrain.

* * * * *

XXIV.

Thus ill bestead, and fearful more of shame -
 Than of the certain peril he stood in, -
 Half furious unto his foe he came,
 Resolved in mind all suddenly to win, -

Or soon to lose, before he once would lin ;*
 And struck at her with more than manly force,
 That from her body, full of filthy sin,
 He raft her hateful head without remorse :
 A stream of coal-black blood forth gushed from her corse.

XXV.

Her scattered brood, soon as their parent dear
 They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
 Groaning full deadly all with troublous fear,
 Gather'd themselves about her body round,
 Weening their wonted entrance to have found
 At her wide mouth ; but, being there withstood,
 They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
 And sucked up their dying mothers blood ;
 Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

* * * * *

XXVII.

His lady seeing all that chanc'd, from far,
 Approach'd in haste to greet his victory ;
 And said, " Fair knight, born under happy star,
 Who see your vanquish'd foes before you lie ;
 Well worthy be you of that armory,
 Wherein ye have great glory won this day,
 And prov'd your strength on a strong enemy ;
 Your first adventure : many such I pray,
 And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may !"

* *Lin*, give over.

XXVIII.

Then mounted he upon his steed again,
 And with the lady backward sought to wend :
 That path he kept, which beaten was most plain,
 Nor ever would to any by-way bend ;
 But still did follow one unto the end,
 The which at last out of the wood them brought.
 So forward on his way (with God to friend)
 He passed forth, and new adventure sought :
 Long way he travelled, before he heard of aught.

XXIX.

At length they chanc'd to meet upon the way
 An aged sire, in long black weeds yclad,
 His feet all bare, his beard all hoary gray,
 And by his belt his book he hanging had ;
 Sober he seemed, and very sagely sad ;
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
 Simple in shew, and void of malice bad ;
 And all the way he prayed, as he went,
 And often knock'd his breast, as one that did repent.

XXX.

He fair the knight saluted, louting* low,
 Who fair him quited, as that courteous was ;
 And after asked him, if he did know
 Of strange adventures, which abroad did pass.
 "Ah ! my dear son," quoth he, "how should, alas !
 Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
 Bidding his beads all day for his trespasss,
 Tidings of war and worldly trouble tell ?
 With holy father sits not with such things to mell.†

* *Louting*, bowing.† *Mell*, meddle.

XXXI.

“But if of danger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebred evil ye desire to hear,
Of a strange man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this country far and near.”
“Of such,” said he, “I chiefly do inquer; ;
And shall thee well reward to shew the place,
In which the wicked wight his days doth wear :
For to all knighthood it is foul disgrace,
That such a cursed creature live so long a space.”

XXXII.

“Far hence,” quoth he, “in wastful wilderness
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever pass, but thorough great distress.”
“Now,” said the lady, “draweth toward night ;
And well I wot, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be ; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might ?
The sun that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth bait his steeds the ocean waves among.”

XXXIII.

“Then with the sun take, sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new work at once begin :
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsel best.”
“Right well, Sir Knight, ye have advised been,”
Quoth then that aged man ; “the w^ly to win
Is wisely to advise. Now day is spent :
Therefore with me ye may take up your inn
For this same night.” The knight was well content :
So with that godly father to his home they went.

XXXIV.

A little lowly hermitage it was,
 Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
 Far from resort of people, that did pass,
 In travel to and fro : a little wide
 There was an holy chapel edified,*
 Wherein the hermit duly wont to say
 His holy things each morn and eventide :
 Thereby a chrystal stream did gently play,
 Which from a sacred fountain welled forth alway.

XXXV.

Arrived there, the little house they fill,
 Nor look for entertainment, where none was ;
 Rest is their feast, and all things at their will :
 The noblest mind the best contentment has.
 With fair discourse the evening so they pass ;
 For that old man of pleasing words had store,
 And well could file his tongue, as smooth as glass :
 He told of saints and popes, and evermore
 He strow'd an Ave-Mary after and before.

XXXVI.

The drooping night thus creepeth on them fast ;
 And the sad humor loading their eye-lids,
 As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
 Sweet slumbering dew, the which to sleep them bids.
 Unto their lodgings then his guests he rides :
 Where when all drown'd in deadly sleep he finds,
 He to his study goes ; and there amidst
 His magic books, and arts of sundry kinds,
 He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds.

* *Edified*, built.

each

XXXVII.

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
 (Let none them read!) thereof did verses frame :
 With which, and other spells like terrible,
 He bade awake black Pluto's grisly dame ;
 And cursed Heaven ; and spake reproachful shame
 Of highest God, the Lord of life and light.
 A bold bad man ! that dar'd to call by name
 Great Gorgon,* prince of darkness and dead night ;
 At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

XXXVIII.

And forth he call'd out of deep darkness dread
 Legions of sprights, the which, like little flies,†
 Fluttering about his ever-damned head,
 Await whereto their service he applies,
 To aid his friends, or fray‡ his enemies :
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest two,
 And fittest for to forge true-seeming lies ;
 The one of them he gave a message to,
 The other by himself staid other work to do.

XXXIX.

He, making speedy way through spersed air,
 And through the world of waters wide and deep,
 To Morpheus' house doth hastily repair,
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steep,

* The ancients were superstitiously afraid of uttering the name of Gorgon, or Demogorgon.—*Warton*.

† Flies are embodiments of evil spirits ; Anacreon forbids us to call them incarnations, as insects are fleshless and bloodless. Beelzebub signifies the Lord of Flies.—*Hunt's Imagination and Fancy*

‡ *Fray*, to frighten,

And low, where dawning day doth never peep,
His dwelling is ; there Tethys his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steep
In silver dew his ever-drooping head,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spread.

XL.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast ;
The one fair fram'd of burnish'd ivory,
The other all with silver overcast ;
And wakeful dogs before them far do lie,
Watching to banish Care their enemy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep.
By them the sprite doth pass in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deep
In drowsy fit he finds ; of nothing he takes keep.

XLI.

And, more to lull him in his slumber soft,
A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,
And ever-drizzling rain upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring wind, much like the sound
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swown.
No other noise, nor peoples troublous cries,
As still are wont t' annoy the walled town,
Might there be heard : but careless Quiet lies
Wrapt in eternal silence far from enemies.*

* The exquisite adaptation of the sound of this stanza to its sense has been much praised. Hunt observes, "A poetical reader need hardly be told that he should humor such verses with a corresponding tone in the recital."

XLII.

The messenger approaching to him spake ;
But his waste words return'd to him in vain :
So sound he slept, that nought might him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and push'd with pain,
Whereat he gan to stretch : but he again
Shook him so hard, that forced him to speak.
As one then in a dream, whose dryer brain
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weak,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence break.

XLIII.

The sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecaté : whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lumpish head, with blame
Half angry askéd him, for what he came.
“ Hither,” quoth he, “ me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborn sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false Dream, that can delude the sleepers sent.”

XLIV.

The god obey'd ; and, calling forth straight way
A diverse dream out of his prison dark,
Delivered it to him, and down did lay
His heavy head, devoid of careful cark ;
Whose senses all were straight benumbed and stark.
He, back returning by the ivory door,
Remounted up as light as cheerful lark ,
And on his little wings the Dream he bore
In haste unto his lord, where he him left before.

XLV.

Who all this while, with charms and hidden arts,
Had made a lady of that other spright,
And fram'd of liquid air her tender parts,
So lively, and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sense it could have ravished quite :
The makers self, for all his wondrous wit,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seem to Una fit.

XLVI.

Now when that idle Dream was to him brought,
Unto that elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of evil thought,
And with false shews abuse his fantasy ;
In sort as he him schooled privily.
And that new creature, born without her due,
Full of the makers guile, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that lady true,
Whose semblance she did carry under feigned hue.

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The foregoing description of the House of Sleep, is one of those exquisite pictures whose richness is equalled only by its truth. Hunt says of it—"We are to suppose a precipitous country, striking gloomily and far downwards to a cavernous sea-shore, in which the bed of Morpheus is placed, the ends of its curtains dipping and fluctuating in the water which reaches it from underground. The door is towards a flat on the land side, with dogs lying far before it, and a lulling sound overhead of wind and rain—the sounds that men love to hear in the intervals

of their own sleep." Chaucer has used a similar figure in describing the "dark valley" of sleep:

" A few wells
Came running from the cliffs adown,
That made a deadly sleeping soun."

The false dream, brought for the purpose of misleading the knight, is one in which the vile Duessa, disguised as Una, is made instrumental in deceiving him as to the character of his true lady. The knight seems credulous, as honest people are apt to be; but we can scarce forgive him for being persuaded to doubt Una. His weakness costs him dear; for the new effort of Archimago, with which the following Canto opens, succeeds so far as to make the Red Cross Knight flee away, leaving "the royal virgin" unprotected in the toils of the arch-hypocrite. The passage describing the artifice being simply disagreeable, it has been omitted.

CANTO II.



The guileful great enchanter parts .
The Red Cross Knight from Truth :
Into whose stead fair Falsehood steps,
And works him woeful ruth.

I.

By this the northern wagoner had set a
His sevenfold team behind the steadfast star b
That was in ocean waves yet never wet, a
But firm is fixt, and sendeth light from far b
To all that in the wide deep wandring are ; c
And cheerful chanticlere with his note shrill c
Had warned once, that Phœbus fiery car, b
In haste was climbing up the eastern hill, c
Full envious that Night so long his room did fill c

II.

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning Dream, and that fair-forged spright,
Came to their wicked master, and gan tell
Their bootless pains, and ill-succeeding night :

Who, all in rage to see his skilful might
 Deluded so, gan threaten hellish pain
 And sad Prosérpines wrath, them to affright.
 But, when he saw his threatening was but vain,
 He cast about, and searcht his baleful books again.

* * * * *

The result is another vile deception, in which Duessa is made to wear the form of Una, to the confusion and horror of her true knight.

VI.

Returning to his bed in torment great,
 And bitter anguish of his guilty sight,
 He could not rest ; but did his stout heart eat,
 And waste his inward gall with deep despight,
 Irsome of life, and too long lingring night.
 At last fair Hesperus in highest sky
 Had spent his lamp, and brought forth dawning light ;
 Then up he rose and clad him hastily ;
 The dwarf him brought his steed : so both away do fly.

VII.

Now when the rosy-fingered Morning fair,
 Weary of aged Tithon's saffron bed,
 Had spread her purple robe through dewy air ;
 And the high hills Titan discovered ;
 The royal virgin shook off drowsyhed :
 And, rising forth out of her baser bower,
 Look'd for her knight, who far away was fled,
 And for her dwarf, that wont to wait each hour ;—
 Then gan she wail and weep to see that woeful stowre.*

* *Stowre*, blow.

VIII.

And after him she rode with so much speed,
As her slow beast could make ; but all in vain :
For him so far had borne his light-foot steed,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdain,
That him to follow was but fruitless pain :
Yet she her weary limbs would never rest ;
But every hill and dale, each wood and plain,
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle breast,
He so ungently left her, whom she loved best.

IX.

But subtile Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandring in woods and forests
(Th' end of his drift), he praised his devilish arts,
That had such might over true meaning hearts :
Yet rests not so, but other means doth make,
How he may work unto her further smarts :
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

X.

He then devised himself how to disguise ;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many forms and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus to himself could make :
Sometime a fowl, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a fox, now like a dragon fell ;
That of himself he oft for fear would quake,
And oft would fly away. O who can tell
The hidden pow'r of herbs, and might of magic spell !

XI.

But now seem'd best the person to put on
 Of that good knight his late beguiled guest :—
 In mighty arms he was yclad anon,
 And silver shield ; upon his coward breast
 A bloody cross, and on his craven crest
 A bunch of hairs discoloured diversely. *Sup. 146.*
 'Full jolly knight he seem'd and well address ;
 And, when he sate upon his courser free,
 Saint George himself ye would have deemed him to be.

XII.

But he, the knight, whose semblance he did bear,
 The true Saint George, was wandred far away,
 Still flying from his thoughts and jealous fear :
 Will was his guide, and grief led him astray.
 At last him chanc'd to meet upon the way
 A faithless Saracen, all arm'd to point,
 In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sans foy ; full large of limb and every joint
 He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

XIII.

He had a fair companion of his way,
 A goodly lady clad in scarlet red,
 Purpled with gold and pearl of rich assay ;
 And like a Persian mitre on her head
 She wore, with crowns and owches garnished,
 The which her lavish lovers to her gave :
 Her wanton palfrey all was overspread
 With tinsel trappings, woven like a wave,
 Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave.

XIV.

With fair disport, and courting dalliance,
She entertain'd her lover all the way :
But, when she saw the knight his spear advance,
She soon left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bade her knight address him to the fray ;
His foe was nigh at hand. He, prick't with pride,
And hope to win his lady's heart that day,
Forth spurred fast ; adown his courser's side
The red blood trickling stain'd the way, as he did ride.

XV.

The knight of the Redcross, when him he spied
Spurring so hot with rage dispiteous,
Gan fairly couch his spear, and towards ride :
Soon meet they both, both fell and furious,
That, daunted with their forces hideous,
Their steeds do stagger, and amazed stand ;
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their own hand,
Do back rebut, and each to other yieldeth land.

XVI.

As when two rams, stirr'd with ambitious pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich-fleeced flock,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Do meet, that, with the terror of the shock
Astonied, both stand senseless as a block,
Forgetful of the hanging victory :
So stood these twain, unmoved as a rock,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

XVII.

The Saracen, sore daunted with the buff,
Snatched his sword, and fiercely to him flies;
Who well it wards, and quiteth cuff with cuff:
Each others equal puissance envies,
And through their iron sides with cruel spies
Does seek to pierce; repining courage yields
No foot to foe: the flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning shields;
And streams of purple blood new dye the verdant fields.

XVIII.

“Curse on that cross,” quoth then the Saracen,
“That keeps thy body from the bitter fit;
Dead long ago, I wot, thou haddest been,
Had not that charm from thee forwarned it:
But yet I warn thee now assured sit,
And hide thy head.” Therewith upon his crest
With rigor so outrageous he smit,
That a large share it hew’d out of the rest,
And glancing down his shield from blame him fairly blest.

XIX.

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
Of native virtue gan eftsoones revive;
And, at his haughty helmet making mark,
So hugely struck, that it the steel did rive,
And cleft his head: he, tumbling down alive,
With bloody mouth his mother earth did kiss,
Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive
With the frail flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whither the souls do fly of men, that live amiss.

XX.

The lady, when she saw her champion fall,
Like the old ruins of a broken tower,
Staid not to wail his woeful funeral ;
But from him fled away with all her power :
Who after her as hastily gan scour,
Bidding the dwarf with him to bring away
The Saracen's shield, sign of the conqueror :
Her soon he overtook, and bad to stay ;
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

XXI.

She turning back, with rueful countenance,
Cried, " Mercy, mercy, sir, vouchsafe to show
On silly dame, subject to hard mischance,
And to your mighty will." Her humbless low
In so rich weeds, and seeming glorious show,
Did much emmove his stout heroick heart ;
And said, " Dear dame, your sudden overthrow
Much rueth me ; but now put fear apart,
And tell, both who ye be, and who that took your part."

XXII.

Melting in tears, then gan she thus lament ;
" The wretched woman, whom unhappy hour
Hath now made thrall to your commandement,
Before that angry heavens list to lower,
And fortune false betray'd me to your power,
Was (O what now availeth that I was !)
Borne the sole daughter of an emperor ;
He that the wide west under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberis doth pass.

XXIII.

He, in the first flower of my freshest age,
 Betrothed me unto the only heir
 Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage ;
 Was never prince so faithful and so fair,
 Was never prince so meek and debonair !
 But, ere my hoped day of spousal shone,
 My dearest lord fell from high honor's stair
 Into the hands of his accursed fone,*
 And cruelly was slain ; that shall I ever moan !

XXIV.

“ His blessed body, spoild of lively breath,
 Was afterward, I know not how, convey'd,
 And from me hid ; of whose most innocent death
 When tidings came to me, unhappy maid,
 O, how great sorrow my sad soul assay'd !
 Then forth I went his woful corse to find,
 And many years throughout the world I stray'd,
 A virgin widow ; whose deep-wounded mind
 With love long time did languish, as the stricken hind.

* * * * *

XXVI.

“ In this sad plight, friendless, unfortunate,
 Now miserable I Fidessa dwell,
 Craving of you, in pity of my state,
 To do none ill, if please ye not do well.”
 He in great passion all this while did dwell,
 More busying his quick eyes, her face to view,
 Than his dull ears, to hear what she did tell ;
 And said, “ Fair lady, heart of flint would rue
 The undeserved woes and sorrows, which ye shew.

* *Fone*, foes.

XXVII.

“Henceforth in safe assurance may ye rest,
Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe that did you molest :
Better new friend than old foe it is said.”
With change of cheer the seeming-simple maid
Let fall her eyes, as shamefast, to the earth,
And yielding soft, in that she nought gainsaid.
So forth they rode, he feigning seemly mirth,
And she coy looks : so dainty, they say, maketh dearth.

XXVIII.

Long time they thus together travelled ;
Till weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that fair did spread
Their arms abroad, with gray moss overcast ;
And their green leaves, trembling with every blast,
Made a calm shadow far in compass round :
The fearful shepherd, often there aghast,
Under them never sat, nor wont there sound
His merry oaten pipe ; but shun'd th' unlucky ground.

XXIX.

But this good knight, soon as he them can spy
For the cool shade him thither hast'ly got ;
For golden Phoebus, now ymounted high,
From fiery wheels of his fair chariot
Hurled his beam so scorching cruel hot,
That living creature might it not abide ;
And his new lady it endured not.
There they alight, in hope themselves to hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.

xxx.

Fair-seemly pleasance each to other makes,
 With goodly purposes, there as they sit ;
 And in his falsed fancy he her takes
 To be the fairest wight, that lived yet ;
 Which to express, he bends his gentle wit ;
 And, thinking of those branches green to frame
 A garland for her dainty forehead fit,
 He pluckt a bough ; out of whose rift therè came*
 Small drops of gory blood, that trickled down the same.

* See the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Canto xiii., st. 41.

“ Pur tragge al fin la spada, e con gran forza
 Percote l'alta pianta. Oh meraviglia !
 Manda fuor sangue la recisa scorza,
 E fa la terra intorno a se vermiglia,
 Tutto si raccapriccia ; e pur rinforza
 Il colpo, e'l fin vederne ei si consiglia.
 Allor, quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente
 Un indistinto gemito dolente,

“ Che poi distinto in voce : Ahi troppo (disse), &c.

He drew his blade at length, and with a bound
 Struck at the towering tree : Oh, marvel sore ;
 Blood followed, from the bark, the gaping wound,
 And dyed the verdant turf beneath with gore ;
 His hair on end, he boldly struck once more,
 Resolved the depths of this foul spell to sound,
 When from the tree as from some hollow tomb,
 A groaning murmur issued through the gloom,

Then words distinctly uttered ; “ Ah forbear ! ”
 So spake the voice ; &c.

XXXI.

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, "O spare with guilty hands to tear
My tender sides in this rough rind embarr'd ;
But fly, ah ! fly far hence away, for fear
Lest to you hap, that happened to me here,
And to this wretched lady, my dear love ;
O too dear love, love bought with death too dear !"
Astound he stood, and up his hair did hove :
And with that sudden horror could no member move.

XXXII.

At last whenas the dreadful passion
Was overpast, and manhood well awake ;
Yet musing at the strange occasion
And doubting much his sense, he thus bespake :
" What voice of damned ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guileful spright wandering in empty air
(Both which frail men do oftentimes mistake),
Sends to my doubtful ears these speeches rare,
And rueful complaints, me bidding guiltless blood to spare ?"

XXXIII.

Then, groaning deep ; " Nor damned ghost," quoth he,
" Nor guileful sprite, to thee these words doth speak ;
But once a man Fradubio, now a tree ;
Wretched man, wretched tree ! whose nature weak
A cruel witch, her cursed will to wreak
Hath thus transformd, and plac'd in open plains,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleak,
And scorching sun does dry my secret veins ;
For though a tree I seem, yet cold and heat me pains."

XXXIV.

“ Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,”
Quoth then the knight ; “ by whose mischievous arts
Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see ?
He oft finds med’cine who his grief imparts ;
But double griefs afflict concealing hearts ;
As raging flames who striveth to suppress.”
“ The author then,” said he, “ of all my smarts,
Is one Duessa, a false sorceress,
This many errant knights hath brought to wretchedness.

XXXV.

“ In prime of youthly years, when courage hot
The fire of love and joy of chivalry
First kindled in my breast, it was my lot
To love this gentle lady, whom ye see
Now not a lady, but a seeming tree ;
With whom as once I rode accompany’d,
Me chanced of a knight encountred be,
That had a like fair lady by his side ;
Like a fair lady, but did foul Duessa hide.

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We omit some stanzas of Fradubio’s story as rather of an unpleasant strain ; his yielding so implicitly to the deceptions of Duessa, and showing so little passion at the recollection of the sad fate of his mistress “ turn’d to trëen mould”—*i. e.* transformed into a tree—by the false witch’s arts, create a sort of disgust with his character. Indeed we can hardly help suspecting our own “ good knight” to be rather a dull fellow, too ; for it is *leze majesté* against all-potent Love, to suppose that a vile Show like Duessa could for a moment deceive eyes that had once

owned his power, unless the lover lacked some of the true elements.

Fradubio finishes his sad story with the account of his own enclosure in the tree, and then the Red Cross Knight asks the duration of the spell :—

XLIII.

“ But how long time,” said then the elfin knight,
“ Are you in this misformed house to dwell ?”
“ We may not change,” quoth he, “ this evil plight,
Till we be bathed in a living well ;
That is the term prescribed by the spell.”
“ O how,” said he, “ might I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted well ?”
“ Time and suffised fates to former kind
Shall us restore ; none else from hence may us unbind.”

XLIV.

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vain Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good knight,
Full of sad fear and ghastly dreariment,
When all this speech the living tree had spent,
The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,
That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound :
Then turning to his lady, dead with fear her found.

XLV.

Her seeming dead he found with feigned fear,
As all unweeting of that well she knew ;
And pain'd himself with busy care to rear
Her out of careless swoun. Her eyelids blue,

And dimmed sight with pale and deadly hue,
At last she up gan lift ; with trembling cheer
Her up he took (too simple and too true),
And oft her kist. At length, all passed fear,
He set her on her steed, and forward forth did bear.

The exquisite description with which the next Canto opens, is not perhaps surpassed in the language. Una's unprotected and sad, but not timorous state—her beauty—her calmness—her heroic courage and pity at sight of the lion, and the immediate and natural reference to her lost love—overpower even the exquisite picturesqueness of the scene, and give us a picture that can never be painted, save by the imagination and the heart.

CANTO III.



Forsaken Truth long seeks her love,
 And makes the lion mild;
 Mars blind Devotions mart, and falls
 In hand of lecher vilde.

I.

NOUGHT is there under heav'ns wide hollowness,*
 That moves more dear compassion of mind,
 Then beauty brought t'unworthy wretchedness
 Through envy's snares, or fortunes freaks unkind.
 I, whether lately through her brightness blind,
 Or through allegiance, and fast feälty,
 Which I do owe unto all womankind,
 Feel my heart pierc'd with so great agony,
 When such I see, that all for pity I could die.

II.

And now it is empassionéd so deep,
 For fairest Una's sake, of whom I sing,
 That my frail eyes these lines with tears do steep,
 To think how she through guileful handeling,

* *Hollowness*, concave.

Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
Though fair as ever living wight was fair,
Though nor in word nor deed ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorcéd in despair,
And her due loves deriv'd to that vile witch's share.

III.

Yet she, most faithful lady all this while
Forsaken, woful, solitary maid,
Far from all people's preace,* as in exile,
In wilderness and wasteful deserts stray'd,
To seek her knight ; who, subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision which th' enchanter wrought,
Had her abandon'd ; she of nought afraid,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought,
Yet wished tidings none of him unto her brought.

IV.

One day, nigh weary of the irksome way,
From her unhasty beast she did alight ;
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay
In secret shadow, far from all mens sight ;
From her fair head her fillet she undight,
And laid her stole aside : Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place ;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

V.

It fortun'd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lion rushed suddenly,
Hunting full greedy after savage blood ;
Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,

* *Preace*, throng.

With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have at once devour'd her tender corse ;
But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,
His bloody rage assuaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amaz'd, forgot his furious force.

VI.

Instead thereof, he kist her weary feet,
And lickt her lily hands, with fawning tongue,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O how can beauty master the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong !
Whose yielded pride and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her heart gan melt in great compassion ;
And drizzling tears did shed for pure affection.

VII.

“ The lion, lord of everie beast in field,”
Quoth she, “ his princely puissance doth abate,
And mighty proud to humble weak does yield,
Forgetful of the hungry rage, which late
Him prick'd, in pity of my sad estate :—
But he, my lion, and my noble lord,
How does he find in cruel heart to hate
Her, that him lov'd, and ever most ador'd
As the god of my life ? why hath he me abhorr'd ?”

VIII.

Redounding tears did choke th' end of her plaint,
Which softly echoed from the neighbor wood ;
And, sad to see her sorrowful constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood ;

With pity calmd, down fell his angry mood.
At last, in close heart shutting up her pain,
Arose the virgin, born of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy palfrey got again,
To seek her strayed champion if she might attain.

IX.

The lion would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong guard
Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard ;
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward ;
And, when she wak'd he waited diligent,
With humble service to her will prepar'd :
From her fair eyes he took commandement,
And ever by her looks conceived her intent.

X.

Long she thus travelled through deserts wide,
By which she thought her wandering knight should pass,
Yet never shew of living wight espied ;
Till that at length she found the trodden grass,
In which the track of peoples footing was,
Under the steep foot of a mountain hoar ; *old*
The same she follows, till at last she has
A damsel spied slow-footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

XI.

To whom approaching, she to her gan call,
To weet, if dwelling-place were nigh at hand :
But the rude wench her answer'd nought at all ;
She could not hear, nor speak, nor understand :

Till, seeing by her side the lion stand,
 With sudden fear her pitcher down she threw,
 And fled away : for never in that land
 Face of fair lady she before did view,
 And that dread lion's look her cast in deadly hue. *fear*

XII.

Full fast she fled, nor ever look'd behind,
 As if her life upon the wager lay ;
 And home she came, whereas her mother blind
 Sate in eternal night ; nought could she say ;
 But, sudden catching hold, did her dismay
 With quaking hands, and other signs of fear ;
 Who full of ghastly fright and cold affray,
 Gan shut the door. By this arrived there
 Dame Una, weary dame, and entrance did requere :

XIII.

Which when none yielded, her unruly page
 With his rude claws the wicket open rent,
 And let her in ; where, of his cruel rage
 Nigh dead with fear, and faint astonishment,
 She found them both in darksome corner pent
 Where that old woman day and night did pray
 Upon her beads, devoutly penitent ;
 Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day,
 And thrice nine hundred *Aves*, she was wont to say.*

* Those who love to trace the allegory in the Faëry Queen will find nothing more exquisite than this of Truth, in all her native loveliness—making “a sunshine in a shady place,”—and accompanied by that noble strength or courage which renders her irresistible, breaking into the dismal abode of Superstition, who in vain strives to bar the entrance against her.

XIV.

And, to augment her painful penance more,
Thrice every week in ashes she did sit,
And next her wrinkled skin, rough sackcloth wore,
And thrice-three times did fast from any bit :
But now for fear her beads she did forget,
Whose needless dread for to remove away,
Fair Una framed words and count'nance fit ;
Which hardly done, at length she gan them pray,
That in their cottage small that night she rest her may.

XV.

The day is spent ; and cometh drowsy night,
When every creature shrouded is in sleep ;
Sad Una down her lays in weary plight,
And at her feet the lion watch doth keep ;
In stead of rest, she does lament, and weep
For the late loss of her dear-loved knight,
And sighs, and groans, and evermore does steep
Her tender breast in bitter tears all night ;
All night she thinks too long, and often looks for light.

XVI.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted high,
Above the shiny Cassiopeias chair,
And all in deadly sleep did drowned lie,
One knocked at the door, and in would fare,
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,
That ready entrance was not at his call ;
For on his back a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stealths, and pillage several,
Which he had got abroad by purchase criminal.

XVII.

He was, to weet, a stout and sturdy thief,
 Wont to rob churches of their ornaments,
 And poor mens boxes of their due relief,
 Which given was to them for good intents :
 The holy saints of their rich vestiments
 He did disrobe, when all men careless slept :
 And spoil'd the priests of their habiliments ;
 Whiles none the holy things in safety kept.
 Then he by cunning sleights in at the window crept.

* * * * *

XIX.

~~XVIII~~

Thus, long the door with rage and threats he beat ;
 Yet of those fearful women none durst rise
 (The lion frayed them), him in to let ;
 He would no longer stay him to advise,
 But open breaks the door in furious wise,
 And entering is ; when that disdainful beast,
 Encountering fierce, him sudden doth surprize ;
 And seizing cruel claws on trembling breast,
 Under his lordly foot him proudly hath suppress.

XX.

Him booteth not resist, nor succor call,
 His bleeding heart is in the venger's hand ;
 Who straight him rent in thousand pieces small,
 And quite dismembred hath : the thirsty land
 Drunk up his life ; his corse left on the strand.
 His fearful friends wear out the woful night,
 Nor dare to weep, nor seem to understand
 The heavy hap, which on them is alight ;
 Afraid, lest to themselves the like mishappen might.

XXI.

Now when broad day the world discovered has,
 Up Una rose, up rose the lion eke ;*
 And on their former journey forward pass,
 In ways unknown, her wandering knight to seek,
 With pains far passing that long-wandering Greek,
 That for his love refused deity :
 Such were the labors of this lady meek,
 Still seeking him, that from her still did fly ;
 Then furthest from her hope, when most she weened nigh.

XXII.

Soon as she parted thence, the fearful twain,
 That blind old woman and her daughter dear,
 Came forth ; and, finding Kirkrapine there slain,
 For anguish great they gan to rend their hair,
 And beat their breasts, and naked flesh to tear :
 And when they both had wept and wail'd their fill,
 Then forth they ran, like two amazed deer,
 Half mad through malice and revenging will,
 To follow her, that was the causer of their ill :

XXIII.

Whom overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
 With hollow howling, and lamenting cry ;
 Shamefully at her railing all the way,
 And her accusing of dishonesty,
 That was the flow'r of faith and chastity :
 And still, amidst her† railing, she did pray
 That plagues, and mischiefs, and long misery,
 Might fall on her, and follow all the way ;
 And that in endless error she might ever stray.

* *Eke*, also.

† *Her*, i. e., the witch's. The poet forgot the witch's companion, and refers to her alone.

XXIV.

But, when she saw her prayers nought prevail,
She back returned with some labor lost ;
And in the way, as she did weep and wail,
A knight her met in mighty arms embost,
Yet knight was not for all his bragging boast ;
But subtle Archimag, that Una sought
By trains into new troubles to have tost :
Of that old woman tidings he besought,
If that of such a lady she could tellen ought.

XXV.

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and rail, and rend her hair,
Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,
That causd her shed so many a bitter tear ;
And so forth told the story of her fear.
Much seemed he to moan her hapless chance,
And after for that lady did inquere ;
Which being taught, he forward gan advance
His fair enchanted steed, and eke his charmed lance.

XXVI.

Ere long he came where Una travell'd slow,
And that wild champion waiting her beside ;
Whom seeing such, for dread he durst not show
Himself too nigh at hand, but turned wide
Unto an hill ; from whence when she him spy'd,
By his like-seeming shield her knight by name
She ween'd it was, and towards him gan ride ;
Approaching nigh she wist it was the same ;
And with fair fearful humbless towards him she came :

XXVII.

And weeping said, " Ah my long-lacked lord,
Where have ye been thus long out of my sight ?
Much feared I to have been quite abhor'd,
Or ought have done, that ye displeasen might,
That should as death unto my dear heart light,
For since mine eye your joyous sight did miss
My cheerful day is turned to cheerless night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is :
But welcome now, my light, and shining lamp of bliss !"

XXVIII.

He thereto meeting said, " My dearest dame,
Far be it from your thought, and from my will,
To think that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leave that have me loved still,
And chose in Faëry court, of mere goodwill,
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth.
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skill
To bring forth fruit, and make eternal dearth,
Than I leave you, my lief,* yborn of heavenly birth.

XXIX.

" And sooth to say, why I left you so long,
Was for to seek adventure in strange place ;
Where, Archimago said, a felon strong
To many knights did daily work disgrace ;
But knight he now shall never more deface :
Good cause of mine excuse that might ye please
Well to accept, and evermore embrace
My faithful service, that by land and seas
Have vow'd you to defend : now then your plaint appease."

* *Lief*, dear.

XXX.

His lovely words her seemd due recompense
 Of all her passed pains : one loving hour
 For many years of sorrow can dispense ;
 A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sour,
 She has forgot how many a woeful stoure*
 For him she late endur'd ; she speaks no more
 Of past : true is, that true love hath no pow'r
 To looken back ; his eyes be fixt before.
 Before her stands her knight, for whom she toild so sore.

XXXI.

Much like, as when the beaten mariner,†
 That long hath wandred in the ocean wide,
 Oft soust in swelling Tethys saltish tears ;
 And long time having tann'd his tawny hide
 With blustering breath of heaven that none can bide,
 And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound ;
 Soon as the port from far he has espied,
 His cheerful whistle merrily doth sound,
 And Nereus crowns with cups ; his mates him pledge around.

XXXII.

Such joy made Una, when her knight she found ;
 And eke th' enchanter joyous seem'd no less
 Than the glad merchant, that does view from ground
 His ship far come from watry wilderness ;

* *Stoure*, blow.

† Leigh Hunt remarks that nobody talks so much about the sea, or its inhabitants, or its voyagers, as Spenser. His pictures of it are perhaps finer than those of any English poet, yet he had seen only the Irish Sea, not that source of sublime images, the boundless ocean.

He hurls out vows, and Neptune oft doth bless.
So forth they past ; and all the way they spent
Discoursing of her dreadful late distress,
In which he ask'd her, what the lion meant ;
Who told her all that fell in journey, as she went.

XXXIII.

They had not ridden far, when they might see
One pricking towards them with a hasty heat,
Full strongly arm'd, and on a courser free
That through his fierceness foamed all with sweat,
And the sharp iron did for anger eat,
When his hot rider spurr'd his chafed side ;
His look was stern, and seemed still to threat
Cruel revenge, which he in heart did hide :
And on his shield *Sans loy* in bloody lines was dyed.

XXXIV.

When nigh he drew unto this gentle pair,
And saw the red cross, which the knight did bear,
He burnt in fire ; and gan eftsoones prepare
Himself to battle with his couched spear.
Loath was that other, and did faint through fear,
To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steel :
But yet his lady did so well him cheer,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feel ;
So bent his spear, and spurr'd his horse with iron heel.

XXXV.

But that proud Paynim forward came so fierce
And full of wrath, that, with his sharp-head spear,
Through vainly crossed shield he quite did pierce ;
And, had his staggering steed not shrank for fear,

Through shield and body eke he should him bear :
Yet, so great was the puissance of his push,
That from his saddle quite he did him bear :
He tumbling rudely down to ground did rush,
And from his gored wound a well of blood did gush.

XXXVI.

Dismounting lightly from his lofty steed,
He to him leapt, in mind to reave* his life,
And proudly said : " Lo, there the worthy meed
Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife ;
Henceforth his ghost freed from repining strife,
In peace may passen over Lethe lake ;
When mourning altars, purg'd with enemies life,
The black infernal furies do aslake :
Life from Sansfoy thou took'st, Sansloy shall from thee take."

XXXVII.

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
Till Una cried, " O hold that heavy hand,
Dear sir, what ever that thou be in place :
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquish'd stand
Now at thy mercy ; mercy not withstand ;
For he is one the truest knight alive,
Though conquered now he lie on lowly land ;
And whilst him fortune favor'd, fair did thrive
In bloody field ; therefore of life him not deprive."

XXXVIII.

Her piteous words might not abate his rage ;
But, rudely rending up his helmet, would
Have slain him straight ; but when he sees his age,
And hoary head of Archimago old,

* *Reave*, take.

His hasty hand he doth amazed hold,
And, half ashamed, wonder'd at the sight :
For that old man well knew he, though untold,
In charms and magick to have wondrous might ;
Nor ever wont in field, nor in round lists to fight :

XXXIX.

And said, " Why, Archimago, luckless sire,
What do I see ? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hither brought to taste mine ire ?
Or thine the fault or mine the error is,
Instead of foe to wound my friend amiss ?"
He answered nought, but in a trance still lay,
And on those guileful dazed eyes of his
The cloud of death did sit ; which done away,
He left him lying so, nor would no longer stay :

XL.

But to the virgin comes ; who all this while
Amazed stands, herself so mock'd to see
By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
For so misfeigning her true knight to be :
Yet is she now in more perplexity,
Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold
From whom her bootheth not at all to fly :
Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
Her from her palfrey pluck'd her visage to behold.

XLI.

But her fiery servant, full of kingly awe
And high disdain, whenas his sovereign dame
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
With gaping jaws full greedy at him came,

And, ramping on his shield, did ween the same
Have reft away with his sharp rending claws :
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His courage more, that from his griping paws
He hath his shield redeemed ; and forth his sword he draws.

XLII.

O then, too weak and feeble was the force
Of savage beast, his puissance to withstand !
For he was strong, and of so mighty corse,
As ever wielded spear in warlike hand ;
And feats of arms did wisely understand.
Eftsoones he pierced through his chafed chest
With thrilling point of deadly iron brand,
And launch'd his lordly heart : with death opprest
He roar'd aloud, whiles life forsook his stubborn breast.

XLIII.

Who now is left to keep the fórlorn maid
From raging spoil of lawless victors will ?
Her faithful guard remov'd ; her hope dismay'd ;
Herself a yielded prey to save or spill !
He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foul reproaches and disdainful spite
Her vilely entertains ; and, will or nill,
Bears her away upon his courser light :
Her prayers nought prevail : his rage is more of might.

XLIV.

And all the way, with great lamenting pain,
And piteous plaints, she filleth his dull ears,
That stony heart could riven have in twain ;
And all the way she wets with flowing tears ;

But he, enraged with rancor, nothing hears.
Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,
But follows her far off, nor ought he fears
To be partaker of her wandring woe,
More mild in beastly kind, than that her beastly foe.

CANTO IV.



To sinful house of Pride Duessa
a guides the faithful knight ;
Where, brother's death to wreak, Sansjoy
Doth challenge him to fight.

I.

YOUNG knight whatever, that dost arms profess,
And through long labors hunttest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of fickleness,
In choice, and change, of thy dear-loved dame ;
Lest thou of her believe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening do thy heart remove :
For unto knight there is no greater shame,
Then lightness and inconstancy in love ;
That doth his Red Cross Knight's ensample plainly prove.

II.

Who, after that he had left fair Una lorn,
Through light misdeeming of her loyalty ;
And false Duessa in her stead had borne,
Called Fidess', and so suppos'd to be ;

Long with her travell'd ; till at last they see
A goodly building, bravely garnished ;
The house of mighty prince it seemed to be ;
And towards it a broad high way that led,
All bare through peoples feet, which thither travelled.

III.

Great troops of people travell'd thitherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place ;
But few returned, having scaped hard,
With baleful beggary, or foul disgrace ;
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.
Thither Duessa bad him bend his pace ;
For she is weary of the toilsome way ;
And also nigh consumed is the lingring day.

IV.

use of Duessa
A stately palace built of squared brick,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose walls were high, but nothing strong nor thick,
And golden foils all over them displaid,
That purest sky with brightness they dismay'd :
High lifted up were many lofty towers,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of fair windows and delightful bowers ;
And on the top a dial told the timely hours.

V.

It was a goodly heap for to behold,
And spake the praises of the workmans wit ;
But full great pity, that so fair a mould
Did on so weak foundation ever sit :

For on a sandy hill, that still did flit
And fall away, it mounted was full high :
That every breath of heaven shaken it ;
And all the hinder parts, that few could spy,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

A keen stroke of satire ; for nothing is so mean as pride ;—so superficial in its shows—so shameless in its counterfeits—so ignorant of the uses of self-respect—so neglectful of private happiness.

VI.

Arrived there, they passed in forth right ;
For still to all the gates stood open wide :
Yet charge of them was to a porter hight,
Cald Malvenú, who entrance none denied ;
Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight ;
Infinite sorts of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the lady of that palace bright.

VII.

By them they pass, all gazing on them round,
And to the presence mount ; whose glorious view
Their frail amazed senses did confound.
In living prince's court none ever knew
Such endless riches, and so sumptuous show ;
Not Persia's self, the nurse of pompous pride,
Like ever saw : and there a noble crew
Of lords and ladies stood on every side,
Which, with their presence fair, the place much beautified.

VIII.

High above all a cloth of state was spread,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day ;
On which there sate, most brave embellished
With royal robes and gorgeous array,
A maiden queen that shone, as Titan's ray,
In glistring gold and peerless precious stone ;
Yet her bright blazing beauty did assay
To dim the brightness of her glorious throne,
As envying her self, that too exceeding shone :

IX.

Exceeding shone, like Phoebus fairest child,
That did presume his father's fiery wain,
And flaming mouths of steeds unwonted wild,
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rein ;
Proud of such glory and advancement vain,
While flashing beams do daze his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin way most beaten plain,
And, rapt with whirling wheels, inflames the skyen
With fire not made to burn, but fairly for to shine.

X.

So proud she shined in her princely state,
Looking to heaven ; for earth she did disdain :
And sitting high ; for lowly she did hate :
Lo, underneath her scornful feet was lain
A dreadful dragon with an hideous train ;
And in her hand she held a mirror bright,
Wherein her face she often viewed fain,
And in her self-lov'd semblance took delight ;
For she was wondrous fair, as any living wight.

XI.

Of grisly Pluto she the daughter was,
 And sad Prosérpina, the queen of hell ;
 Yet did she think her peerless worth to pass
 That parentage, with pride so did she swell ;
 And thundering Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell
 And wield the world, she claimed for her sire ;
 Or if that any else did Jove excel ;
 For to the highest she did still aspire ;
Or, if ought higher were than that, did it desire.

XII.

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
 That made herself a queen, and crown'd to be ;
 Yet rightful kingdom she had none at all
 Nor heritage of native sovereignty ;
 But did usurp with wrong and tyranny
 Upon the sceptre which she now did hold :
 Nor rul'd her realm with laws, but policy,
 And strong advisement of six wizards old,
 That with their counsels bad her kingdom did uphold.

XIII.

Soon as the elfin knight in presence came,
 And false Duessa, seeming lady fair,
 A gentle usher, Vanity by name,
 Made room, and passage for them did prepare :
 So goodly brought them to the lowest stair
 Of her high throne ; where they, on humble knee
 Making obeisance, did the cause declare,
 Why they were come, her royal state to see,
 To prove the wide report of her great majesty.

XIV.

With lofty eyes, half loth to look so low, *a*
 She thanked them in her disdainful wise; *b*
 Nor other grace vouchsafed them to show *c*
 Of princess worthy; scarce them bade arise, *d*
 Her lords and ladies all this while devise *e*
 Themselves to setten forth to strangers sight: *f*
 Some frounce their curled hair in courtly guise; *g*
 Some prank their ruff; and others trimly dight *h*
 Their gay attire: each others greater pride does spite. *i*

XV.

Goodly they all that knight do entertain,
 Right glad with him to have increas'd their crew;
 But to Duesse^s each one himself did pain
 All kindness and fair courtesy to shew;
 For in that court *whylome** her well they knew:
 Yet the stout Faëry mongst the middest crowd
 Thought all their glory vain in knightly view,
 And that great princess too exceeding proud,
 That to strange knight no better countenance allow'd.

XVI.

Sudden upriseth from her stately place
 The royal dame, and for her coach did call:
 All hurtle† forth; and she with princely pace,
 As fair Aurora, in her purple pall,
 Out of the east the dawning day doth call,
 So forth she comes; her brightness broad doth blaze.
 The heaps of people, thronging in the hall,
 Do ride each other, upon her to gaze:
 Her glorious glitter and light doth all mens eyes amaze.

* *Whylome*, of old.† *Hurtle*, to rush.

XVII.

So forth she comes, and to her coach does climb,
Adorned all with gold and garlands gay,
That seem'd as fresh as Flora in her prime ;
And strove to match, in royal rich array,
Great Juno's golden chair ; the which, they say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To Jove's high house through heaven's brass-paved way,
Drawn of fair peacocks, that excel in pride,
And full of Argus eyes their tails dispredden wide.

The lady not condescending to turn her looks toward the earth—thinking lightly of her immortal parentage—aspiring to something higher than the highest—making herself a queen, without any rightful kingdom—having Vanity for her usher ;—her followers frowning and pranking at the coming in of the strangers—all this is unsurpassable in its way. Milton paints the pride of rebel angels ; Spenser that of—shall we say it ?—women. The latter has made as much of his subject—in *proportion*.

XVIII.

But this was drawn of six unequal beasts,
On which her six sage counsellors did ride,
Taught to obey their bestial behests,
With like conditions to their kinds applied ;
Of which the first, that all the rest did guide,
Was sluggish Idleness, the nurse of Sin ;
Upon a slothful ass he chose to ride,
Arrayed in habit black, and amice thin ;
Like to an holy monk, the service to begin.

XIX.

And in his hand his portesse* still he bare,
 That much was worn, but therein little read ;
 For of devotion he had little care,
 Still drown'd in sleep, and most of his days dead :
 Scarce could he once uphold his heavy head,
 To looken whether it were night or day.
 May seem the wain was very evil led,
 When such an one had guiding of the way,
 That knew not, whether right he went or else astray.

XX.

From worldly cares himself he did esloyne,†
 And greatly shunned manly exercise ;
 From every work he challenged essoyne,‡
 For contemplation sake : yet otherwise
 His life he led in lawless riotise ;
 By which he grew to grievous malady :
 For in his lustless limbs, through evil guise,
 A shaking fever reign'd continually :
 Such one was Idleness, first of this company.

*

*

*

*

*

A part of this description of the train of Pride is omitted as unsuited to our present purposes, but the power, truth and beauty of the remaining pictures is in no degree injured by this separation.

* *Portesse*, breviary or prayer-book.

† Fr. *Eloigner*, to withdraw.

‡ *Essoyne*, excuse.

XXVII.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a camel loaden all with gold :
Two iron coffers hung on either side,
With precious metal full as they might hold ;
And in his lap an heap of coin he told ;
For of his wicked pelf his god he made,
And unto hell himself for money sold ;
Accursed usury was all his trade ;
And right and wrong alike in equal balance weigh'd.

XXVIII.

His life was nigh unto death's door yplac'd ;
And thread-bare coat, and cobbled shoes he ware ;
Nor scarce good morsel all his life did taste ;
But both from back and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and riches to compare ;
Yet child nor kinsman living had he none
To leave them to ; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly fear to lose his own,
He led a wretched life, unto himself unknown.

XXIX.

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffice ;
Whose greedy lust did lack in greatest store ;
Whose need had end, but no end covetise ;
Whose wealth was want ; whose plenty made him poor ;
Who had enough, yet wished ever more ;
A vile disease ; and eke in foot and hand
A grievous gout tormented him full sore ;
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand ;
Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this fair band !

XXX.

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw
Between his canker'd teeth a venomous toad
That all the poison ran about his jaw ;
But inwardly he chewed his own maw
At neighbors wealth, that made him ever sad ;
For death it was, when any good he saw ;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had ;
But, when he heard of harm, he waxed wondrous glad.

XXXI.

All in a kirtle of discolored say
He clothed was, ypainted full of eyes ;
And in his bosom secretly there lay
An hateful snake, the which his tail upties
In many folds, and mortal sting implies :
Still as he rode, he gnash'd his teeth to see
Those heaps of gold with griping Covetyse ;
And grudged at the great felicity
Of proud Lucifera, and his own company.

XXXII.

He hated all good works and virtuous deeds,
And him no less, that any like did use ;
And, who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
His alms for want of faith he doth accuse :
So every good to bad he doth abuse :
And eke the verse of famous poets wit
He does backbite, and spiteful poison spues
From leprous mouth on all that ever writ :
Such one vile Envy was, that fifth in row did sit.

XXXIII.

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,
 Upon a lion, loth for to be led ;
 And in his hand a burning brand he hath,
 The which he brandisheth about his head :
 His eyes did hurl forth sparkles fiery red,
 And stared stern on all that him beheld ;
 As ashes pale of hue, and seeming dead ;
 And on his dagger still his hand he held,
 Trembling through hasty rage, when choler in him swell'd.

XXXIV.

His ruffian raiment all was stain'd with blood
 Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent ;
 Through unadvised rashnes waxen wode ;*
 For of his hands he had no government,
 Nor car'd for blood in his avengement :
 But, when the furious fit was overpast,
 His cruel facts he often would repent ;
 Yet, wilful man, he never would forecast,
 How many mischiefs should ensue his heedless haste.

XXXV.

Full many mischiefs follow cruel Wrath ;
 Abhorred Bloodshed, and tumultuous Strife,
 Unmanly Murder, and unthrifty Scath,
 Bitter Despight with Rancors rusty knife ;
 And fretting Grief, the enemy of life :
 All these, and many evils more haunt Ire,
 The swelling Spleen, and Frenzy raging rife,
 The shaking Palsy, and Saint Francis fire :
 Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire.†

* *Wode*, mad.† *Tire*, a rank, or row—as, a tire of ordnance.

XXXVI.

And, after all, upon the wagon beam
Rode Satan with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lash'd the lazy team,
So oft as Sloth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Shouting for joy ; and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land ;
And, underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead skulls and bones of men, whose life had gone astray.*

XXXVII.

So forth they marched in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open air,
And in fresh flow'ring fields themselves to sport :
Amongst the rest rode that false lady fair,
The foul Duessa, next unto the chair
Of proud Lucifer', as one of the train :
But that good knight would not so nigh repair,
Himself estranging from their joyance vain,
Whose fellowship seem'd far unfit for warlike swain.

XXXVIII.

So, having solaced themselves a space
With pleasance of the breathing fields yfed,
They back returned to the princely place ;
Whereas an errant knight in arms yclad,
And heathenish shield, wherein with letters red
Was writ *Sans joy*, they new arrived find :
Enflam'd with fury and fierce hardihood,
He seem'd in heart to harbor thoughts unkind,
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

* Is there not, in this procession, the substance of many sermons ?

XXXIX.

Who, when the shamed shield of slain Sansfoy
 He spied with that same Faëry champion's page,
 Betraying him that did of late destroy
 His eldest brother ; burning all with rage,
 He to him leapt, and that same envious gage
 Of victors glory, from him snatch'd away :
 But the Elfin knight, which ought* that warlike wage,
 Disdained to lose the meed he won in fray ;
 And, him rencountring fierce, rescued the noble prey.

XL.

Therewith they gan to hurtle† greedily,
 Redoubted battle ready to darrayne,‡
 And clash their shields, and shake their swords on high ;
 That with their sturre§ they troubled all the train :
 Till that great queen, upon eternal pain
 Of high displeasure that ensuen might,
 Commanded them their fury to refrain ;
 And if that either to that shield had right,
 In equal lists they should the morrow next it fight.

XLI.

“ Ah dearest dame,” quoth then the Paynim bold,
 “ Pardon the error of enraged wight,
 Whom great grief made forget the reins to hold
 Of reason's rule, to see this recreant knight,

* *Ought*, owned.† *Hurtle*, to rush with violence.‡ *Darrayne*, to venture.§ *Sturre*, noise.

(No knight, but treachour full of false despite
And shameful treason), who through guile hath slain
The prowest* knight, that ever field did fight,
Even stout Sansfoy (O who can then refrain ?)
Whose shield he bears reverst, the more to heap disdain.

XLII.

“ And to augment the glory of his guile,
His dearest love, the fair Fidessa, lo
Is there possessed of the traitor vile ;
Who reaps the harvest sown by his foe,
Sown in bloody field, and bought with woe :
That—brother’s hand shall dearly well requite,
So be, O Queen, you equal favor show.”
Him little answer’d th’ angry Elfin knight ;
He never meant with words, but swords, to plead his right :

XXIII.

But threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge,
His cause in combat the next day to try :
So been they parted both, with hearts on edge,
To be aveng’d each on his enemy.
That night they pas in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bower and hall ;
For steward was excessive Gluttony,
That of his plenty poured forth to all :
Which done the chamberlain Sloth did to rest them call.

*

*

*

*

* *Prowest*, bravest.

CANTO V.

say to canto

The faithful knight in equal field
Subdues his faithless foe ;
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
His cure to hell does go.

Spenser

I.

THE noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, until it forth have brought
Th' eternal brood of glory excellent.
Such restless passion did all night torment
The flaming courage of that Faëry knight,
Devising, how that doughty tournament
With greatest honor be achieved might :
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

II.

At last, the golden oriental gate
Of greatest heaven gan to open fair,
And Phœbus, fresh as bridegroom to his mate,
Came dancing forth, shaking his dewy hair ;

And hurl'd his glistering beams through gloomy air.
Which when the wakeful Elf perceiv'd, straightway
He started up, and did himself prepare
In sunbright arms, and battailous array ;
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

III.

And forth he comes into the common hall ;
Where early wait him many a gazing eye,
To weet what end to stranger knights may fall.
There many minstrels maken melody,
To drive away the dull melánocholy ;
And many bards, that to the trembling chord
Can tune their timely voices cunningly ;
And many chroniclers, that can record
Old loves, and wars for ladies done by many a lord.

IV.

Soon after comes the cruel Saracen,
In woven mail all armed warily ;
And sternly looks at him, who not a pin
Does care for look of living creatures eye.
They bring them wines of Greece and Araby,
And dainty spices fetch from furthest Ind,
To kindle heat of courage privily ;
And in the wine a solemn oath they bind
T' observe the sacred laws of arms, that are assigned.

V.

At last forth comes that far renowned queen ;
With royal pomp and princely majesty,
She is ybrought unto a paled* green,
And placed under stately canopy,

* *Paled*, enclosed.

The warlike feats of both these knights to see.
On th' other side in all mens open view
Duessa placed is, and on a tree
Sansfoy his shield is hang'd with bloody hue :
Both those, the laurel garlands to the victor due.

VI.

A shrilling trumpet sounded from on high,
And unto battle bade themselves address :
Their shining shields about their wrists they tie,
And burning blades about their heads do bless,
The instruments of wrath and heaviness :
With greedy force each other doth assail,
And strike so fiercely, that they do impress
Deep dinted furrows in the batter'd mail :
The iron walls to ward their blows are weak and frail.

VII.

The Saracen was stout and wondrous strong,
And heaped blows like iron hammers great ;
For after blood and vengeance he did long.
The knight was fierce, and full of youthly heat,
And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders threat :
For all for praise and honor did he fight.
Both stricken strike, and beaten both do beat ;
That from their shields forth flyeth fiery light,
And helmets, hewed deep, shew marks of either's might.

VIII.

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right :
As when a griffen, seized of his prey,
A dragon fierce encountreth in his flight,
Through widest air making his idle way,

See

That would his rightful ravine* rend away :
 With hideous horror both together smite,
 And souse so sore, that they the heavens affray :
 The wise soothsayer, seeing so sad sight,
 Th' amazed vulgar tells of war and mortal fight.

IX.

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right ;
 And each to deadly shame would drive his foe :
 The cruel steel so greedily doth bite
 In tender flesh, that streams of blood down flow ;
 With which the arms, that erst so bright did show,
 Into a pure vermillion now are dyed.
 Great ruth in all the gazers' hearts did grow,
 Seeing the gored wounds to gape so wide,
 That victory they dare not wish to either side.

X.

At last the Paynim chanc'd to cast his eye,
 His sudden eye, flaming with wrathful fire,
 Upon his brother's shield, which hung thereby :
 Therewith redoubled was his raging ire,
 And said ; " Ah ! wretched son of woful sire,
 Doest thou sit wailing by black Stygian lake,
 Whilst here thy shield is hang'd for victors hire ?
 And, sluggish german,† dost thy forces slake
 To after-send his foe, that him may overtake ?

XI.

" Go, captive Elf, him quickly overtake,
 And soon redeem from his long-wand'ring woe :
 Go, guilty ghost, to him my message make,
 That I his shield have quit from dying foe."

* *Ravine*, prey.† *German*, relative.

Therewith upon his crest he struck him so,
That twice he reeled, ready twice to fall :
End of the doubtful battle deemed tho*
The lookers on ; and loud to him gan call
The false Duessa, “ Thine the shield, and I, and all !”

XII.

Soon as the Faëry heard his lady speak,
Out of his swooning dream he gan awake ;
And quick’ning faith, that erst was waxen weak,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake ;
Tho mov’d with wrath, and shame, and ladies sake,
Of all at once he cast aveng’d to be,
And with so’ exceeding fury at him strake,
That forced him to stoop upon his knee :
Had he not stooped so, he should have cloven be.

XIII.

And to him said ; “ Go now, proud miscreant,
Thyself thy message do to german dear ;
Alone he, wandring, thee too long doth want :
Go say, his foe thy shield with his doth bear.”
Therewith his heavy hand he high gan rear,
Him to have slain ; when lo ! a darksome cloud
Upon him fell ; he nowhere doth appear,
But vanish’d is. The Elf him calls aloud,
But answer none receives ; the darkness him does shroud.

XIV.

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running said ; “ O prowest knight,
That ever lady to her love did chose,
Let now abate the terror of your might,

And quench the flame of furious despite
And bloody vengeance : lo ! th' infernal powers,
Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Have borne him hence to Pluto's baleful bowers :
The conquest yours ; I yours ; the shield and glory yours !”

XV.

Not all so satisfied, with greedy eye
He sought, all round about, his thirsty blade
To bathe in blood of faithless enemy ;
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade :
He stands amazed how he thence should fade.
At last the trumpets triumph sound on high
And running heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victory ;
And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmity.

XVI.

Wherewith he goeth to that sovereign queen ;
And, falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seen ;
Which she accepts with thanks and goodly gree,
Greatly advancing his great chivalry :
So marcheth home, and by her takes the knight,
Whom all the people follow with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on hight,
That all the air it fills, and flies to heaven bright.

XVII.

Home is he brought, and laid in sumptuous bed :
Where many skilful leeches him abide
To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oil they wash his woundes wide,

And softly gan embalm on every side.
And all the while most heavenly melody
About the bed sweet music did divide,
Him to beguile of grief and agony :
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

XVIII.

As when a weary traveller, that strays
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
Unweeting of the perilous wand'ring ways,
Doth meet a cruel crafty crocodile,
Which, in false grief hiding his harmful guile,
Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender tears ;
The foolish man, that pities all this while
His mournful plight, is swallowed up unwares ;
Forgetful of his own that minds anothers cares.

Sim
allis

XIX.*

So wept Duessa until eventide,
That shining lamps in Joves high house were light :
Then forth she rose, nor longer would abide ;
But comes unto the place, where th' heathen knight,
In slumbring swoon nigh void of vital spright,
Lay cover'd with enchanted cloud all day :
Whom when she found, as she him left in plight,
To wail his woful case she would not stay,
But to the eastern coast of heaven makes speedy way.

* Of the sixteen stanzas which follow, Prof. Wilson says, " Not in all poetry is there a higher and longer flight more majestically sustained, not even in Homer the daring, or Virgil the divine."

XX.

Where grisly Night, with visage deadly sad,
That Phœbus cheerful face durst never view,
And in a foul black pitchy mantle clad,
She finds forth coming from her darksome mew;
Where she all day did hide her hated hue.
Before the door her iron chariot stood,
Already harnessed for journey new,
And coal-black steeds yborn of hellish brood,
That on their rusty bits did champ, as they were wood.*

XXI.

Who when she saw Duessa, sunny bright,
Adorn'd with gold and jewels shining clear,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted light began to fear
(For never did such brightness there appear);
And would have back retired to her cave,
Until the witch's speech she gan to hear,
Saying; "Yet O thou dreaded dame, I crave
Abide, till I have told the message which I have."

XXII.

She staid; and forth Duessa gan proceed;
"O thou, most ancient grandmother of all,
More old than Jove, whom thou at first didst breed,
Or that great house of gods celestial;
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world unmade;
Why suffredst thou thy nephews dear to fall
With Elfin sword most shamefully betray'd?
Lo, where the stout Sansjoy doth sleep in deadly shade!

* *Wood*, mad.

XXIII.

“ And, him before, I saw with bitter eyes
 The bold Sansfoy shrink underneath his spear ;
 And now the prey of fowls in field he lies,
 Nor wail’d of friends, nor laid on groaning bier,
 That whylome was to me too dearly dear,
 O ! what of gods then boots it to be born,
 If old Aveugle’s son’s so evil hear ?
 Or who shall not great Nightës children scorn,
 When two of three her nephews are so foul forlorn ?

XXIV.

“ Up, then ; up, dreary dame, of darkness queen ;
 Go, gather up the reliques of thy race ;
 Or else go, them avenge ; and let be seen
 That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,
 And can the children of fair Light deface.”
 Her feeling speeches some compassion mov’d
 In heart, and change in that great mother’s face :
 Yet pity in her heart was never prov’d
 Till then ; for evermore she hated, never lov’d :

XXV.

And said, “ Dear daughter, rightly may I rue
 The fall of famous children born of me,
 And good successes, which their foes ensue :
 But who can turn the stream of destiny,
 Or break the chain of strong necessity,
 Which fast is tied to Jove’s eternall seat ?*
 The sons of Day he favoresh, I see,
 And by my ruins thinks to make them great :
 To make one great by others loss is bad escheat.

So in the Iliad, Book viii. :—

Let down our golden, everlasting chain,
 Whose strong embrace holds Heaven, and Earth, and Main.

XXVI.

“Yet shall they not escape so freely all ;
For some shall pay the price of others guilt :
And he, the man that made Sansfoy to fall,
Shall with his own blood price that he has spilt.
But what art thou, that tell’st of nephews kilt ?”
“I, that do seem not I, Duessa am,”
Quoth she, “how ever now, in garments gilt
And gorgeous gold array’d, I to thee came ;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceit and Shame.”

XXVII.

Then, bowing down her aged back, she kist
The wicked witch, saying ; “In that fair face
The false resemblance of Deceit, I wist,
Did closely lurk ; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darksome place
Could it discern ; though I the mother be
Of Falsehood, and root of Duessa’s race.
O welcome, child, whom I have long’d to see,
And now have seen unwares ! Lo, now I go with thee.”

XXVIII.

Then to her iron wagon she betakes,
And with her bears the foul wellfavor’d witch :
Through mirksome air her ready way she makes.
Her twofold team (of which two black as pitch,
And two were brown, yet each to each unlich)
Did softly swim away, nor ever stamp
Unless she chanc’d their stubborn mouths to twitch ;
Then, foaming tar their bridles they would champ,
And trampling the fine element would fiercely ramp.

XXIX.

So well they sped, that they be come at length
Unto the place, whereas the Paynim lay
Devoid of outward sense and native strength,
Cover'd with charmed cloud from view of day
And sight of men, since his late luckless fray.
His cruel wounds with cruddy blood congeal'd
They binden up so wisely as they may.
And handle softly, till they can be heal'd :
So lay him in her chariot, close in night conceal'd.

XXX.

And, all the while she stood upon the ground,
The wakeful dogs did never cease to bay ;
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound,
With which her iron wheels did them affray,
And her dark grisly look them much dismay,
The messenger of death, the ghastly owl,
With dreary shrieks did also her betray ;
And hungry wolves continually did howl
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so foul.

XXXI.

Thence turning back in silence soft they stole,
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulf of deep Avernus hole :
By that same hole an entrance, dark and base,
With smoke and sulphur hiding all the place,
Descends to hell : there creature never past,
That back returned without heavenly grace ;
But dreadful furies, which their chains have brast,*
And damned sprights sent forth to make ill men aghast.

* *Brast*, burst.

XXXII.

By that same way the direful dames do drive
Their mournful chariot, fil'd with rusty blood,
And down to Pluto's house are come bilive :*
Which passing through, on every side them stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood,
Chatt'ring their iron teeth, and staring wide
With stony eyes ; and all the hellish brood
Of fiends infernal flock'd on every side,
To gaze on earthly wight, that with the Night durst ride.

XXXIII.

They pass the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many souls sit wailing woefully ;
And come to fiery flood of Phlegethon,
Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharp shrilling shrieks do bootless cry,
Cursing high Jove, the which them thither sent.
The house of endless Pain is built thereby,
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures do eternally torment.

XXXIV.

Before the threshold dreadful Cerberus
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand adders venomous ;
And lolled forth his bloody flaming tongue ;
At them he gan to rear his bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, until Day's enemy
Did him appease ; then down his tail he hung,
And suffered them to passen quietly :
For she in hell and heaven had power equally.

* *Bilive*, forthwith, immediately.

XXXV.

There was Ixion turned on a wheel,
 For daring tempt the queen of heaven to sin ;
 And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reel
 Against an hill, nor might from labor lin ;* *cease*
 There thirsty Tantalus hung by the chin :
 And Tityus fed a vulture on his maw ;
 Typhœus' joints were stretched on a gin ;
 Theseus condemn'd to endless sloth by law ;
 And fifty sisters water in leak vessels draw.

XXXVI.

They all beholding worldly wights in place,
 Leave off their work, unmindful of their smart,
 To gaze on them ; who forth by them do pace,
 Till they be come unto the furthest part ;
 Where was a cave ywrought by wondrous art,
 Deep, dark, uneasy, doleful, comfortless,
 In which sad Æsculapius far apart
 Emprison'd was in chains remédiless ;
 For that Hippolytus' rent corse he did redress.

XXXVII.

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was,
 That wont in chariot chase the foaming boar ;
 He all his peers in beauty did surpass,
 But ladies love, as loss of time, forbore :
 His wanton stepdame loved him the more ;
 But when she saw her offered sweets refus'd,
 Her love she turn'd to hate, and him before
 His father fierce of treason false accus'd
 And with her jealous terms his open ears abus'd ;

* *Lin*, cease.

XXXVIII.

Who, all in rage, his sea-god sire besought
Some cursed vengeance on his son to cast :
From surging gulf two monsters straight were brought ;
With dread whereof his chasing steeds aghast
Both chariot swift and huntsman overcast.
His goodly corpse, on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismemb' red, and his members chaste
Scattered on every mountain as he went,
That of Hippolytus was left no monument.

XXXIX.

His cruel stepdame, seeing what was done,
Her wicked days with wretched knife did end,
In death avowing th' innocence of her son.
Which hearing, his rash sire began to rend
His hair, and hasty tongue that did offend :
Tho' gathering up the reliques of his smart,
By Dian's means who was Hippolyt's friend,
Them brought to Æsculape, that by his art
Did heal them all again, and joined every part.

XL.

Such wondrous science in man's wit to reign
When Jove avizd,* that could the dead revive,
And fates expired could renew again,
Of endless life he might him not deprive ;
But unto hell did thrust him down alive,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore ;
Where, long remaining, he did always strive
Himself with salves to health for to restore,
And slake the heavenly fire that raged evermore.

* *Avizd*, beheld.

XLI.

There ancient Night arriving, did alight
From her nigh-weary wain, and in her arms
To Æsculapius brought the wounded knight:
Whom having softly disarray'd of arms,
Then gan to him discover all his harms,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
If either salves, or oils, or herbs, or charms,
A fordone wight from door of death might raise,
He would at her request prolong her nephew's days.

XLII.

"Ah dame," quoth he, "thou temptest me in vain
To dare the thing, which daily yet I rue;
And the old cause of my continued pain
With like attempt to like end to renew.
Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven due,
Here endless penance for one fault I pay;
But that redoubled crime with vengeance new
Thou biddest me to eke? can Night defray
The wrath of thund'ring Jove, that rules both Night and Day?"

XLIII.

"Not so," quoth she; "but, since that heaven's king
From hope of heaven hath thee excluded quite,
Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing;
And fearest not that more thee hurten might,
Now in the power of everlasting Night?
Go to then, O thou far renowned son
Of great Apollo, show thy famous might
In medicine, that else hath to thee won
Great pains, and greater praise, both never to be done."

XLIV.

Her words prevail'd ; and then the learned leech
His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things else the which his art did teach.
Which having seen, from thence arose away
The mother of dread Darkness, and let stay
Aveugle's son there in the leech's cure ;
And, back returning, took her wonted way
To run her timely race, whilst Phoebus pure
In western waves his weary wagon did recure.

XLV.

The false Duessa, leaving noxious Night,
Return'd to stately palace of Dame Pride ;
Where when she came, she found the Faëry knight
Departed thence ; albeit (his woundes wide
Not throughly heal'd) unready were to ride.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away ;
For on a day his wary dwarf had spied
Where, in a dungeon deep, huge numbers lay
Of caitive wretched thralls, that wailed night and day

XLVI.

(A rueful sight as could be seen with eye) ;
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captivity ;
How mortgaging their lives to Covetise,
Through wasteful pride and wanton riotise,
They were by law of that proud tyranness,
Provok'd with Wrath and Envy's false surmise,
Condemned to that dungeon merciless,
Where they should live in woe, and die in wretchedness.

XLVII.

There was that great proud king of Babylon,
That would compel all nations to adore
And him, as only God, to call upon ;
Till, through celestial doom thrown out of door,
Into an ox he was transform'd of yore.
There also was king Cræsus, that enhanc'd
His heart too high through his great riches' store ;
And proud Antiochus, the which advanc'd
His cursed hand 'gainst God, and on his altars danc'd.

XLVIII.

And, them long time before, great Nimrod was,
That first the world with sword and fire warray'd ;*
And after him old Ninus far did pass
In princely pomp, of all the world obey'd,
There also was that mighty monarch laid
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native sire did foul upbraid,
And would as Ammon's son be magnified ;
Till scorn'd of God and man, a shameful death he died.

XLIX.

All these together in one heap were thrown,
Like carcasses of beasts in butcher's stall.
And, in another corner, wide were strown
The antique ruins of the Roman's fall :
Great Romulus, the grandsire of them all ;
Proud Tarquin ; and too lordly Lentulus ;
Stout Scipio ; and stubborn Hannibal ;
Ambitious Sylla ; and stern Marius ;
High Cæsar ; great Pompey ; and fierce Antonius.

* *Warray'd*, troubled.

L.

Amongst these mighty men were women mixt,
Proud women, vain, forgetful of their yoke :
The bold Semiramis, whose sides transfix'd
With son's own blade her foul reproaches spoke :
Fair Sthenobœa, that herself did choke
With wilful chord, for wanting of her will ;
High-minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of aspēs sting herself did stoutly kill :
And thousands more the like, that did that dungeon fill.

LI.

Besides the endless routs of wretched-thralls,
Which thither were assembled, day by day,
From all the world, after their woful falls
Through wicked pride and wasted wealth's decay.
But most, of all which in that dungeon lay
Fell from high princes' courts, or ladies' bowers ;
Where they in idle pomp, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods and thriftless hours,
And lastly thrown themselves into these heavy stowres.*

LII.

Whose case whenas the careful dwarf had told,
And made ensample of their mournful sight
Unto his master ; he no longer would
There dwell in peril of like painful plight,
But early rose ; and, ere that dawning light
Discovered had the world to heaven wide,
He by a privy postern took his flight,
That of no envious eyes he might be spy'd :
For, doubtless, death ensued if any him descried.

* *Stowres*, misfortunes.

LIII.

Scarce could he footing find in that foul way,
For many corses, like a great lay-stall,
Of murdered men, which therein strowed lay
Without remorse or decent funeral ;
Which all through that great Princess Pride did fall.
And came to shameful end ; and them beside,
Forth riding underneath the castle wall,
A dunghill of dead carcasses he spied ;
The dreadful spectacle of that sad House of Pride.

CANTO VI.

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From lawless lust by wondrous grace,  
Fair Una is releast ;  
Whom savage nation does adore,  
And learns her wise behest.

## I.

As when a ship, that flies fair under sail,  
An hidden rock escaped hath unwares,  
That lay in wait her wreck for to bewail ;  
The mariner yet half amazed stares  
At peril past, and yet in doubt not dares  
To joy at his foolhappie oversight :  
So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares  
The dreadless courage of this Elfin knight,  
Having escap'd so sad ensamples in his sight.

## II.

Yet sad he was, that his too hasty speed  
The fair Duess' had forc'd him leave behind ;  
And yet more sad, that Una, his dear dreed,  
Her truth had stained with treason so unkind ;

Yet crime in her could never creature find :  
 But for his love, and for her own self sake,  
 She wandered had from one to other Ind,  
 Him for to seek, nor ever would forsake :  
 Till her unwares the fierce Sansloy did overtake ;

\* \* \* \* \*

Una, falling into the hands of the vile Sansloy or Lawless, is released by a band of Satyrs, who, wild as they are, are softened by her beauty, and endeavor to banish her fear by their rude courtesy. It is a fine rural picture, the woods ringing with double echoes, the Satyrs wearing the ground with their horned feet, as they leap like kids, dancing about the rescued maiden.

#### XI.

Such fearful fit assail'd her trembling hart ;  
 Nor word to speak, nor joint to move, she had ;  
 The savage nation feel her secret smart,  
 And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad ;  
 Their frowning foreheads, with rough horns yclad  
 And rustic horror, all aside do lay ;  
 And, gently grinning, show a semblance glad  
 To comfort her ; and, fear to put away,  
 Their backward-bent knees teach her humbly to obey.

#### XII.

The doubtful damsel dare not yet commit  
 Her single person to their barbarous truth ;  
 But still twixt fear and hope amaz'd does sit,  
 Late learn'd what harm to hasty trust ensu'th.  
 They, in compassion of her tender youth,  
 And wonder of her beauty sovereign,  
 Are won with pity and unwonted ruth ;  
 And all prostrate upon the lowly plain,  
 Do kiss her feet and fawn on her with count'nance fain.\*

\* *Fain*, glad.



## XIII.

Their hearts she guesseth by their humble guise,  
And yields her to extremity of time :  
So from the ground she fearless doth arise,  
And walketh forth without suspect of crime :  
They, all as glad as birds of joyous prime,  
Thence led her forth, about her dancing round,  
Shouting, and singing all a shepherds rhyme ;  
And with green branches strowing all the ground,  
Do worship her as queen with olive garland crowned.

## XIV.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,  
That all the woods with double echo ring ;  
And with their horned feet do wear the ground,  
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring.  
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring ;  
Who, with the noise awaked, cometh out  
To weet the cause, his weak steps governing  
And aged limbs on cypress stadle stout ;  
And with an ivy twine his waist is girt about.

## XV.

Far off he wonders what them makes so glad,  
Or Bacchus merry fruit they did invent,  
Or Cybeles frantic rites have made them mad :  
They, drawing nigh, unto their god present  
That flower of faith and beauty excellent :  
The god himself, viewing that mirror rare,  
Stood long amaz'd, and burnt in his intent :  
His own fair Dryope now he thinks not fair,  
And Pholoë foul, when her to this he doth compare.

## XVI.

The wood-born people fall before her flat,  
And worship her as goddess of the wood ;  
And old Sylvanus self bethinks not, what  
To think of wight so fair ; but gazing stood  
In doubt to deem her born of earthly brood :  
Sometimes dame Venus self he seems to see ;  
But Venus never had so sober mood :  
Sometimes Diana he her takes to be ;  
But misseth bow and shafts, and buskins to her knee.

## XVII.

By view of her he 'ginneth to revive  
His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse :  
And calls to mind his portraiture alive,  
How fair he was, and yet not fair to this ;  
And how he slew with glancing dart amiss  
A gentle hind, the which the lovely boy  
Did love as life, above all worldly bliss :  
For grief whereof the lad n'ould\* after joy ;  
But pin'd away in anguish and self-will'd annoy.

## XVIII.

The woody nymphs, fair Hamadryades,  
Her to behold do thither runne apace ;  
And all the troop of lightfoot Naiades  
Flock all about to see her lovely face :  
But, when they viewed have her heavenly grace,  
They envy her in their malicious mind,  
And fly away for fear of foul disgrace ;  
But all the Satyrs scorn their woody kind,  
And henceforth nothing fair, but her, on earth they find.

\* *N'ould*, would not.

## XIX.

Glad of such luck, the luckless lucky maid  
Did her content to please their feeble eyes ;  
And long time with that savage people staid,  
To gather breath in many miseries :  
During which time her gentle wit she plies,  
To teach them truth, which worshipped her in vain,  
And made her th' image of idolatries :  
But, when their bootless zeal she did restrain  
From her own worship, they her ass would worship fain.

## XX.

It fortuned, a noble warlike knight  
By just occasion to that forest came  
To seek his kindred, and the lineage right,  
From whence he took his well-deserved name :  
He had in arms abroad won muchell\* fame,  
And fill'd far lands with glory of his might ;  
Plain, faithful, true, and enemy of shame,  
And ever lov'd to fight for ladies' right :  
But in vain glorious frays he little did delight.

Here follows a long account of the birth and parentage of Sir Satyrane—the son of a Satyr and the “fair Thyamis,”—a gallant knight, though of a wild and rough nature. His father had taught him to play with “the lion and the rugged bear,” and to find amusement in robbing the she-wolf of her whelps, and taming the wild bulls of the forest, until they trembled and fled at sight of him.

\* *Muchell*, much.

## XXV.

Thereby so fearless and so fell he grew,  
That his own sire and master of his guise  
Did often tremble at his horrid view ;  
And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise  
The angry beasts not rashly to despise,  
Nor too much to provoke ; for he would learn  
The lion stoop to him in lowly wise  
(A lesson hard), and make the libbard stern  
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did yearn.

## XXVI.

And, for to make his power approved more,  
Wild beasts in iron yokes he would compel ;  
The spotted panther, and the tusked boar,  
The pardale\* swift, and the tigré cruél,  
The antelope and wolf, both fierce and fell ;  
And them constrain in equal team to draw,  
Such joy he had their stubborn hearts to quell,  
And sturdy courage tame with dreadful awe,  
That his behest they feared, as a tyrants law.

## XXVII.

His loving mother came upon a day  
Unto the woods, to see her little son ;  
And chanc'd unwares to meet him in the way,  
After his sports and cruel pastime done ;  
When after him a lioness did run,  
That roaring all with rage did loud require  
Her children dear, whom he away had won :  
The lion whelps she saw how he did bear,  
And lull in rugged arms withouten childish fear.

\* *Pardale*, camelopard.

## XXVIII.

The fearful dame all quaked at the sight,  
And turning back gan fast to fly away ;  
Until, with love revok'd from vain affright,  
She hardly yet persuaded was to stay,  
And then to him these womanish words gan say :  
“ Ah, Satyrane, my darling and my joy,  
For love of me leave off this dreadful play ;  
To dally thus with death is no fit toy :  
Go, find some other play-fellows, mine own sweet boy.”

## XXIX.

In these and like delights of bloody game  
He trained was, till riper years he raught ;  
And there abode, whilst any beast of name  
Walk'd in that forest, whom he had not taught  
To fear his force : and then his courage haught\*  
Desir'd of foreign foemen to be known,  
And far abroad for strange adventures sought ;  
In which his might was never overthrown ;  
But through all Faëry land his famous worth was blown.

## XXX.

Yet evermore it was his manner fair,  
After long labors and adventures spent,  
Unto those native woods for to repair,  
To see his sire and offspring ancient.  
And now he hither came for like intent ;  
Where he unwares the fairest Una found,  
Strange lady, in so strange habiliment,  
Teaching the Satyrs, which her sat around,  
True sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound.

\* *Haught*, high.



## XXXI.

He wonder'd at her wisdom heavenly rare,  
Whose like in woman's wit he never knew ;  
And, when her courteous deeds he did compare,  
Gan her admire, and her sad sorrows rue,  
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw,  
And joy'd to make proof of her cruelty  
On gentle dame, so hurtless and so true.  
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,  
And learn'd her discipline of faith and verity.

## XXXII.

But she, all vow'd unto the Redcross knight,  
His wandering peril closely did lament,  
Nor in this new acquaintance could delight ;  
But her dear heart with anguish did torment,  
And all her wit in secret counsels spent,  
How to escape. At last in privy wise  
To Satyrane she showed her intent ;  
Who, glad to gain such favor, gan devise,  
How with that pensive maid he best might thence arise.

## XXXIII.

So on a day, when satyrs all were gone  
To do their service to Sylvanus old,  
The gentle virgin, left behind alone,  
He led away with courage stout and bold.  
Too late it was to satyrs to be told,  
Or ever hope recover her again ;  
In vain he seeks that, having, cannot hold.  
So fast he carried her with careful pain,  
That they the woods are past, and come now to the plain.



## XXXIV.

The better part now of the lingring day  
They travell'd had, whenas they far espied  
A weary wight forwandring by the way ;  
And towards him they gan in haste to ride,  
To weet of news that did abroad betide,  
Or tidings of her knight of the Redcross ;  
But he, them spyng gan to turn aside  
For fear, as seem'd, or for some feigned loss :  
More greedy they of news fast towards him do cross.

## XXXV.

A silly man, in simple weeds forworn,  
And soil'd with dust of the long dried way ;  
His sandals were with toilsome travel torn,  
And face all tann'd with scorching sunny ray,  
As he had travell'd many a summer's day  
Through boiling sands of Arabie and Inde ;  
And in his hand a Jacob's staff, to stay  
His weary limbs upon ; and eke behind  
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

## XXXVI.

The knight, approaching nigh, of him inquir'd  
Tidings of war, and of adventures new ;  
But wars, nor new adventures, none he heard.  
Then Una gan to ask, if ought he knew  
Or heard abroad of that her champion true,  
That in his armor bare a croslet red.  
“ Ay me ! dear dame,” quoth he, “ well may I rue  
To tell the sad sight which mine eyes have read ;  
These eyes did see that knight both living and eke dead.”

## XXXVII.

That cruel word her tender heart so thrill'd,  
 That sudden cold did run through every vein,  
 And stony horror all her senses fill'd,  
 With dying fit that down she fell for pain.  
 The knight her lightly reared up again,  
 And comforted with courteous kind relief:  
 Then, won from death, she bad him tellen plain  
 The further process of her hidden grief:  
 The lesser pangs can bear, who hath endur'd the chief.

## XXXVIII

Then gan the pilgrim thus; "I chanc'd this day,  
 This fatal day, that shall I ever rue,  
 To see two knights, in travel on my way  
 (A sorry sight), arrang'd in battle new,  
 Both breathing vengeance, both of wrathful hue  
 My fearful flesh did tremble at their strife,  
 To see their blades so greedily imbrue,  
 That, drunk with blood, yet thirsted after life: [knife."  
 What more? the Redcross knight was slain with Paynim

## XXXIX.

"Ah! dearest lord," quoth she, "how might that be,  
 And he the stoutest knight, that ever won?"  
 "Ah! dearest dame," quoth he, "how might I see  
 The thing, that might not be, and yet was done?"  
 "Where is," said Satyrane, "that Paynim's son,  
 That him of life, and us of joy, hath reft?"  
 "Not far away," quoth he, "he hence doth won\*  
 Foreby a fountain, where I late him left [cleft."  
 Washing his bloody wounds, that through the steel were

\* Won, travel.

## XL.

Therewith the knight then marched forth in haste,  
While Una, with huge heaviness opprest,  
Could not for sorrow follow him so fast ;  
And soon he came, as he the place had guest,  
Whereas that Pagan proud himself did rest  
In secret shadow by a fountain side ;  
Even he it was, that erst would have suppress  
Fair Una ; whom when Satyrane espied,  
With foul reproachful words he boldly him defied ;

## XLI.

And said ; “ Arise, thou cursed miscreant,  
That hast with knightless guile, and treacherous train,  
Fair knighthood foully shamed, and doest vaunt  
That good knight of the Redcross to have slain :  
Arise, and with like treason now mainttain  
Thy guilty wrong, or else thee guilty yield.”  
The Saracen, this hearing, rose amain,  
And, catching up in haste his three-square shield  
And shining helmet, soon him buckled to the field ;

## XLII.

And, drawing nigh him, said ; “ Ah ! misborn Elf,  
In evil hour thy foes thee hither sent  
Another's wrongs to wreak upon thyself :  
Yet ill thou blamest me, for having blent  
My name with guile and traitorous intent :  
That Redcross knight, perdie,\* I never slew ;  
But had he been, where erst his arms were lent,  
Th' enchanter vain his error should not rue :  
But thou his error shalt, I hope, now proven true.”

\* *Perdie*, a sort of oath.

## XLIII.

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell, *a*  
 To thunder blows, and fiercely to assail *b*  
 Each other, bent his enemy to quell ; *a*  
 That with their force they pierc'd both plate and mail, *b*  
 And made wide furrows in their flesh's frail, *b*  
 That it would pity any living eye : *c*  
 Large floods of blood adown their sides did rail ; *b*  
 But floods of blood could not them satisfy : *c*  
 Both hungered after death ; both chose to win, or die. *c*

## XLIV

So long they fight, and full revenge pursue,  
 That, fainting, each themselves to breathe let ;  
 And, oft refreshed, battle oft renew,  
 As when two boars with rankling malice met,  
 Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret ;  
 Till breathless both themselves aside retire,  
 Where, foaming wrath, their cruel tusks they whet,  
 And trample th' earth, the whiles they may respire ;  
 Then back to fight again, new breathed and entire.

## XLV.

So fiercely, when these knights had breathed once,  
 They gan to fight return ; increasing more  
 Their puissant force, and cruel rage at once,  
 With heaped strokes more hugely than before :  
 That with their dreary wounds, and bloody gore,  
They both deformed, scarcely could be known.  
 By this, sad Una fraught with anguish sore,  
 Led with their noise which through the air was thrown,  
 Arriv'd where they in earth their fruitless blood had sown.

## XLVI.

Whom all so soon as that proud Saracen *sandily*  
 Espied, he gan revive the memory  
 Of his lewd love and late attempted sin ;  
 And left the doubtful battle hastily,  
 To catch her newly offer'd to his eye ;  
 But Satyrane, with strokes him turning, staid,  
 And sternly bad him other business ply  
 Than hunt the steps of pure unspotted maid :  
 Wherewith he, all enrag'd, these bitter speeches said ;

## XLVII.

“ O foolish faëry's son, what fury mad  
 Hath thee incenst to haste thy doleful fate ?  
 Were it not better I that lady had  
 Than that thou hadst repented it too late ?  
 Most senseless man he, that himself doth hate  
 To love another : Lo then for thine aid,  
 Here, take thy lovers token on thy pate.”  
 So they to fight ; the whiles the royal maid  
 Fled far away, of that proud Paynim sore afraid.

## XLVIII.

( But that false pilgrim, which that leasing told,  
 Being in deed old Archimage, did stay  
 In secret shadow all this to behold ;  
 And much rejoiced in their bloody fray :  
 But, when he saw the damsel pass away,  
 He left his stand, and her pursued apace,  
 In hope to bring her to her last decay.  
 But for to tell her lamentable case,  
 And eke this battle's end, will need another place.



## CANTO VII.



The Redcross knight is captive made  
By giant proud opprest :  
Prince Arthur meets with Una great-  
ly with those news distrest.

## I.

WHAT man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,  
As to descry the crafty cunning train,  
By which Deceit doth mask in visor fair,  
And cast her colors dyed deep in grain,  
To seem like Truth, whose shape she well can feign,  
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,  
The guiltless man with guile to entertain ?  
Great mistress of her art was that false dame,  
The false Duessa, cloked with fair Fidessa's name.

## II.

Who, when returning from the dreary Night,  
She found not in that perilous House of Pride,  
Where she had left the noble Redcross knight,  
Her hoped prey ; she would no longer bide,



But forth she went to seek him far and wide.  
 Ere long she found, whereas he weary sate  
 To rest himself, foreby a fountain side,  
 Disarmed all of iron-coated plate ;  
 And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

## III.

He feeds upon the cooling shade, and bayes\*  
 His sweaty forehead in the breathing wind,  
 Which through the trembling leaves full gently plays,  
 Wherein the cheerful birds of sundry kind  
 Doe chant sweet musick, to delight his mind ;  
 The witch approaching gan him fairly greet,  
 And with reproach of carelessness unkind  
 Upbraid, for leaving her in place unmeet,  
 With foul words temp'ring fair, sour gall with honey sweet.

## IV.

Unkindness past, they gan of solace treat,  
 And bathe in plesance of the joyous shade,  
 Which shielded them against the boiling heat,  
 And, with green boughs decking a gloomy shade,  
 About the fountain like a garland made ;  
 Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,  
 Nor ever would through fervent summer fade :  
 The sacred nymph, which therein wont to dwell,  
 Was out of Dian's favor, as it then befel.

## V.

The cause was this : One day, when Phœbe fair  
 With all her band was following the chase,  
 This nymph, quite tir'd with heat of scorching air,  
 Sat down to rest in midst of the race ;

\* *Bayes*, bathes.

The goddess wroth gan foully her disgrace,  
 And bade the waters, which from her did flow,  
 Be such as she herself was then in place.  
 Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and slow ;  
 And all, that drink thereof, do faint and feeble grow.

## \*VI.

Hereof this gentle knight unweeting was ;  
 And, lying down upon the sandy graile,\*  
 Drink of the stream, as clear as christal glass ;  
 Eftsoones his manly forces gan to fail,  
 And mighty strong was turn'd to feeble frail,  
 His changed powers at first themselves not felt ;  
 Till crudled cold his courage gan assail,  
 And cheerful blood in faintness chill did melt,  
 Which, like a fever fit, through all his body swelt.

## VII.

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,  
 Pour'd out in looseness on the grassy ground,  
 Both careless of his health, and of his fame :  
 Till at the last he heard a dreadful sound,  
 Which through the wood loud bellowing did rebound,  
 That all the earth for terror seem'd to shake,  
 And trees did tremble. 'Th' Elf, therewith astound,  
 Upstarted lightly from his looser make,†  
 And his unready weapons gan in hand to take.

## VIII.

But ere he could his armor on him dight,  
 Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy  
 With sturdy steps came stalking in his sight,  
 An hideous giant, horrible and high,

\* *Graile*, gravel, in this case, though it is sometimes used with a far different signification.

† *Make*, mate.

That with his tallness seem'd to threat the sky ;  
 The ground eke groaned under him for dread :  
 His living like saw never living eye,  
 Nor durst behold ; his stature did exceed  
 The height of three the tallest sons of mortal seed.

## IX.

The greatest Earth his úncouth mother was,  
 And blustering Æolus his boasted sire.

\* \* \* \* \*

## X.

So grown great, through arrogant delight,  
 Of th' high descent whereof he was yborn,\*  
 And through presumption of his matchless might,  
 All other powers and knighthood he did scorn.  
 Such now he marchieth to this man forlorn,  
 And left to loss ; his stalking steps are staid  
 Upon a snaggy oak, which he had torn  
 Out of his mother's bowels, and it made  
 His mortal mace, wherewith his foemen he dismay'd.

## XI.

That, when the knight he spied, he gan advance  
 With huge force and insúportable main,†  
 And towards him with dreadful fury prance ;  
 Who hapless, and eke hopeless, all in vain  
 Did to him pace sad battle to darrayne.‡  
 Disarm'd, disgrac'd, and inwardly dismay'd ;  
 And eke so faint in every joint and vein,  
 Through that frail fountain, which him feeble made,  
 That scarcely could he wield his bootless single blade.

\* *Yborn*, born.

† *Main*, so our proverbial phrase, "with might and main."

‡ *Darrayne*, venture.

## XII.

The giant struck so mainly merciless,  
That could have overthrown a stony tower ;  
And, were 't not heavenly grace that did him bless,  
He had been powder'd all, as thin as flour ;  
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,\*  
And lightly leapt from underneath the blow :  
Yet so exceeding was the villain's power  
That with the wind it did him overthrow,  
And all his senses stunn'd, that still he lay full low.

## XIII.

As when that devilish iron engine, wrought  
In deepest hell, and fram'd by furie's skill,  
With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,  
And ramm'd with bullet round, ordain'd to kill,  
Conceiveth fire ; the heavens it doth fill  
With thundering noise, and all the air doth choke,  
That none can breathé, nor see, nor hear at will,  
Through smouldry cloud of duskish stinking smoke ;  
That th' only breath him daunts, who hath escap'd the stroke.

## XIV.

So daunted when the giant saw the knight,  
His heavy hand he heaved up on high,  
And him to dust thought to have battered quite,  
Until Duessa loud to him gan cry ;  
" O great Orgoglio, greatest under sky,  
Oh ! hold thy mortal hand for ladies sake ;  
Hold for my sake, and do him not to die,  
But vanquish'd thine eternal bondslave make,  
And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy leman take."

\* *Stowre*, blow.

## XV.

He hearken'd, and did stay from further harms,  
To gain so goodly guerdon\* as she spake :  
So willingly she came into his arms,  
Who her as willingly to grace did take,  
And was possessed of his newfound make.  
Then up he took the slumbered senseless corse ;  
And, ere he could out of his swoon awake,  
Him to his castle brought with hasty force,  
And in a dungeon deep him threw without remorse.

## XVI.

From that day forth Duessa was his dear,  
And highly honor'd in his haughty eye.  
He gave her gold and purple pall to wear,  
And triple crown set on her head full high,  
And her endow'd with royal majesty :  
Then, for to make her dreaded more of men,  
And people's hearts with awful terror tie,  
A monstrous beast ybred in filthy fen  
He chose, which he had kept long time in darksome den.

## XVII.

Such one it was as that renowned snake  
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,  
Long fostered in the filth of Lerna lake :  
Whose many heads out-budding ever new  
Did breed him endless labor to subdue,  
But this same monster much more ugly was ;  
For seven great heads out of his body grew !  
An iron breast, and back of scaly brass,  
And all embrued in blood his eyes did shine as glass.

\* *Guerdon*, reward.



## XVIII.

His tail was stretched out in wondrous length,  
 That to the house of heavenly gods it raught ;\*  
 And with extorted power, and borrow'd strength,  
 The ever burning lamps from thence it brought,  
 And proudly threw to ground, as things of naught  
 And underneath his filthy feet did tread  
 The sacred things, and holy <sup>will</sup>hests† foretaught.  
 Upon this dreadful beast with sevenfold head  
 He set the false Duessa, for more awe and dread.

## XIX.

The woful dwarf, which saw his master's fall  
 (Whiles he had keeping of his grazing steed),  
 And valiant knight become a captive thrall ;  
 When all was past, took up his forlorn weed ;  
 His mighty armor, missing most at need ;  
 His silver shield, now idle, masterless ;  
 His poynant spear, that many made to bleed ;  
 The rueful monuments of heaviness ;  
 And with them all departs, to tell his great distress.

## XX.

He had not travell'd long, when on the way  
 He woful lady, woful Una, met  
 Fast flying from that Paynim's greedy prey,  
 Whilst Satyrane him from pursuit did let :‡ *hinder*  
 Who when her eyes she on the dwarf had set,  
 And saw the signs that deadly tidings spake,  
 She fell to ground for sorrowful regret,  
 And lively breath her sad breast did forsake ;  
 Yet might her piteous heart be seen to pant and quake.

\* Raught, reached.

† Hests, will.

‡ Let, hinder.

## XXI.

The messenger of so unhappy news  
 Would fain have died ; dead was his heart within ;  
 Yet outwardly some little comfort shews :  
 At last, recovering heart, he does begin  
 To rub her temples, and to chafe her chin,  
 And every tender part does toss and turn :  
 So hardly he the flitted life does win  
 Unto her native prison to return.  
 Then gins her grieved ghost thus to lament and mourn :

## XXII.

“Ye dreary instruments of doleful sight,  
 That do this dreadly spectacle behold,  
 Why do ye longer feed on loathed light,  
 Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,  
 Sith\* cruel Fates the careful threads unfold,  
 The which my life and love together tied ?  
 Now let the stony dart of senseless Cold  
 Pierce to my heart, and pass through every side ;  
 And let eternal night so sad sight from me hide.

## XXIII.

“O lightsome Day, the lamp of highest Jove,  
 First made by him men’s wandring way to guide,  
 When darkness he in deepest dungeon drove ;  
 Henceforth thy hated face for ever hide,  
 And shut up heavens windows shining wide :  
 For earthly sight can nought but sorrow breed,  
 And late repentance, which shall long abide  
 Mine eyes no more on vanity shall feed,  
 But, sealed up with death, shall have their deadly meed.”

\* *Sith*, since.

## XXIV

Then down again she fell unto the ground ;  
But he her quickly reared up again :  
Thrice did she sink adown in deadly swoond,  
And thrice he her reviv'd with busy pain,  
At last when life recover'd had the rein,  
And over-wrestled his strong enemy,  
With falt'ring tongue, and trembling every vein,  
“ Tell on,” quoth she, “ the woful tragedy,  
The which these reliques sad present unto mine eye :

The distress of Una has surely far less the tone of Truth mourning Holiness, than of earthly maid weeping her earthly love. The next stanza is the very echo of the thoughts of those who are smitten to the soul and bowed with hopeless sorrow. It could scarcely have been written by one who had never suffered, so natural is the wild despair of the thoughts, accompanied all the while with a deep sense of the necessity for submission.

## XXV.

“ Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her spite,  
And thrilling Sorrow thrown his utmost dart :  
Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heavy plight  
Than that I feel, and harbor in mine heart :  
Who hath endur'd the whole, can bear each part.  
If death it be, it is not the first wound,  
That launched hath my breast with bleeding smart.  
Begin, and end the bitter baleful stound ;  
If less than that I fear, more favor I have found.”

## XXVI.

Then gan the dwarf the whole discourse declare ;  
 The subtile trains of Archimago old ;  
 The wanton loves of false Fidessa fair,  
 Bought with the blood of vanquish'd Paynim bold ;  
 The wretched pair transformed to treën mould ;  
 The House of Pride, and perils round about ;  
 The combat, which he with Sansjoy did hold ;  
 The luckless conflict with the giant stout,  
 Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood in doubt.

## XXVII.

She heard with patience all unto the end ;  
 And strove to master sorrowful assay,  
 Which greater grew, the more she did contend,  
 And almost rent her tender heart in tway ;  
 And love fresh coals unto her fire did lay :  
For greater love, the greater is the loss.  
 Was never lady loved dearer day\*  
 Than she did love the knight of the Redcross ;  
 For whose dear sake so many troubles her did toss.

## XXVIII.

At last when fervent sorrow slaked was,  
 She up arose, resolving him to find  
 Alive or dead ; and forward forth did pass  
 All as the dwarf the way to her assign'd ;  
 And evermore, in constant careful mind,  
 She fed her wound with fresh renewed bale :  
 Long tost with storms, and beat with bitter wind,  
 High over hills, and low adown the dale,  
 She wandered many a wood, and measur'd many a vale.

\* *I. e.*, loved the light of day dearer.

## XXIX.

At last she chanced by good hap to meet  
 A goodly knight, fair marching by the way,  
 Together with his squire, arrayed meet :  
His glittering armor shined far away,  
Like glancing light of Phœbus' brightest ray ;  
 From top to toe no place appeared bare,  
 That deadly dint of steel endanger may :  
 Athwart his breast a baldrick brave he ware, [rare :  
 That shin'd like twinkling stars, with stones most precious

## XXX.

And, in the midst thereof, one precious stone  
 Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might,  
 Shap'd like a lady's head, exceeding shone,  
 Like Hesperus amongst the lesser lights,  
 And strove for to amaze the weaker sights :  
 Thereby his mortal blade full comely hung  
 In ivory sheath, ycarved with curious sleights,  
 Whose hilts were burnish'd gold ; and handle strong  
 Of mother pearl ; and buckled with a golden tongue.

## XXXI.

His haughty helmet, horrid all with gold,  
 Both glorious brightness and great terror bred :  
 For all the crest a dragon did enfold  
 With greedy paws, and over all did spread  
 His golden wings ; his dreadful hideous head  
 Close couched on the beaver, seem'd to throw  
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red,  
 That sudden horror to faint hearts did show,  
 And scaly tail was stretch'd adown his back full low.



## XXXII.

Upon the top of all his lofty crest,  
 A bunch of hairs discolor'd diversely,\* *See p. 62.*  
 With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest,  
 Did shake, and seem'd to dance for jollity;  
 Like to an almond tree ymounted high,  
 On top of green Selinis all alone,  
 With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;  
 Whose tender locks do tremble every one  
 At every little breath, that under heaven is blown.

## XXXIII.

His warlike shield all closely cover'd was,  
 Nor might of mortal eye be ever seen;  
 Not made of steel, nor of enduring brass  
 (Such earthly metals soon consumed been),  
 But all of diamond perfect pure and clean  
 It framed was, one massy éntire mould,  
 Hew'n out of adamant rock with engines keen,  
 That point of spear it never percent† could,  
 Nor dint of direful sword divide the substance would.

## XXXIV.

The same to wight he never wont disclose,  
 But whenas monsters huge he would dismay,  
 Or daunt unequal armies of his foes,  
 Or when the flying heavens he would affray:  
 For so exceeding shone his glistening ray,  
 That Phoebus' golden face it did attain,  
 As when a cloud his beams doth overlay;  
 And silver Cynthia waxed pale and faint,  
 As when her face is stained with magic arts constraint.

\* This line is identical with another in the same Book, Canto ii., stanza 11.  
 Of this 82d stanza, Hunt says, "The whole is perfection."

† *Percent*, pierce.

## XXXV.

No magic arts hereof had any might,  
Nor bloody words of bold enchanter's call ;  
But all that was not such as seem'd in sight  
Before that shield did fade, and sudden fall :  
And when him list the rascal routs appal,  
Men into stones therewith he could transmew,  
And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all :  
And, when him list the prouder looks subdue,  
He would them, gazing, blind, or turn to other hue.

## XXXVI.

Nor let it seem that credence this exceeds ;  
For he that made the same, was known right well  
To have done much more admirable deeds :  
It Merlin was, which whylome did excel.  
All living wights in might of magic spell :  
Both shield, and sword, and armor all he wrought  
For this young prince, when first to arms he fell ;  
But, when he died, the Faëry Queen it brought  
To Faërie land ; where yet it may be seen, if sought.

## XXXVII.

A gentle youth, his dearly loved squire,  
His spear of heben wood behind him bare,  
Whose harmful head, thrice heated in the fire,  
Had riven many a breast with pikehead square :  
A goodly person ; and could manage fair  
His stubborn steed with curbed canon bit,  
Who under him did trample as the air,  
And chaf'd that any on his back should sit ;  
The iron rowels into frothy foam he bit.

## XXXVIII.

Whenas this knight nigh to the lady drew,  
 With lovely court he gan her entertain ;  
 But, when he heard her answers loth, he knew  
 Some secret sorrow did her heart distraint :  
 Which to allay, and calm her storming pain,  
 Fair feeling words he wisely gan display,  
 And for her humor fitting purpose fain  
 To tempt the cause itself for to betray ;  
 Wherewith enmov'd, these bleeding words she gan to say ;

## XXXIX.

“ What world’s delight, or joy of living speech,  
 Can heart, so plung’d in sea of sorrows deep,  
 And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach ?  
 The careful Cold beginneth for to creep,  
 And in my heart his iron arrow steep,  
 Soon as I think upon my bitter bale\*  
 Such helpless harms it’s better hidden keep,  
 Than rip up grief, where it may not avail ;  
 My last left comfort is my woes to weep and wail.”

## XL.

“ Ah lady dear,” quoth then the gentle knight,  
 “ Well may I ween your grief is wondrous great ;  
 For wondrous great grief groaneth in my spright,  
 While thus I hear you of your sorrows treat.  
 But, woeful lady, let me you intreat  
 For to unfold the anguish of your heart :  
Mishaps are master’d by advice discreet,  
 And counsel mitigates the greatest smart ;  
 Found never help, who never would his hurts impart.”

\* *Bale*, sorrow.

## XLI.

“ Oh ! but,” quoth she, “ great grief will not be told,  
And can more easily be thought than said.”  
“ Right so,” quoth he : “ but he, that never would,  
Could never : will to might gives greatest aid.”  
“ But grief,” quoth she, “ does greater grow display’d,  
If then it find not help, and breeds despair.” ✓  
“ Despair breeds not,” quoth he, “ where faith is staid.”  
“ No faith so fast,” quoth she, “ but flesh does pair.”  
“ Flesh may impair,” quoth he, “ but reason can repair.”

## XLII.

His goodly reason, and well-guided speech,  
So deep did settle in her gracious thought,  
That her persuaded to disclose the breach  
Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought ;  
And said ; “ Fair sir, I hope good hap have brought  
You to inquire the secrets of my grief ;  
Or that your wisdom will direct my thought ;  
Or that your prowess can me yield relief :  
Then hear the story sad, which I shall tell you brief.

## XLIII.

“ The forlorn maiden, whom your eyes have seen  
The laughing stock of Fortune’s mockeries,  
Am th’ only daughter of a king and queen,  
Whose parents dear (whiles equal destinies  
Did run about, and their felicities  
The favorable heavens did not envy),  
Did spread their rule through all the territories,  
Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,  
And Gehons golden waves do wash continually :

## XLIV.

"Till that their cruel cursed enemy,  
 An huge great dragon, horrible in sight,  
 Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,  
 With murderous ravin and devouring might,  
 Their kingdom spoil'd, and country wasted quite,  
 Themselves, for fear into his jaws to fall,  
 He forc'd to castle strong to take their flight ;  
 Where, fast embarr'd in mighty brazen wall,  
 He has them now four years besieg'd to make them thrall.

## XLV.

"Full many knights, adventurous and stout,  
 Have enterpriz'd that monster to subdue :  
 From every coast, that heaven walks about,  
 Have thither come the noble martial crew,  
 That famous hard achievements still pursue ;  
 Yet never any could that garland win,  
 But all still shrunk ; and still he greater grew ;  
 All they for want of faith, or guilt of sin,  
 The piteous prey of his fierce cruelty have been.

## XLVI.

"At last, yled\* with far reported praise,  
 Which flying Fame throughout the world had spread,  
 Of doughty knights, whom Faëry land did raise,  
 That noble order hight of Maidenhead,  
 Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped, — *Elizabeth*  
 Of Gloriane, great queen of glory bright,  
 Whose kingdom's seat Cleopolis is read ; †  
 There to obtain some such redoubted knight  
 That parents dear from tyrant's power deliver might.

\* Yled, led.

† Read, called,



## XLVII.

“It was my chance (my chance was fair and good)  
There for to find a fresh unproved knight ;  
Whose manly hands imbrued in guilty blood  
Had never been, nor ever by his might  
Had thrown to ground the unregarded right :  
Yet of his prowess proof he since has made  
(I witness am) in many a cruel fight ;  
The groaning ghosts of many one dismay’d  
Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging blade.

## XLVIII.

“And ye, the forlorn reliques of his power,  
His biting Sword and his devouring Spear,  
Which have endured many a dreadful stowre,\*  
Can speak his prowess, that did erst you bear,  
And well could rule ; now he hath left you here  
To be the record of his rueful loss,  
And of my doleful disadventurous dear :  
O heavy record of the good Redcross,  
Where have ye left your lord, that could so well you toss ?”

## XLIX.

“Well hoped I, and fair beginnings had,  
That he my captive languor should redeem :  
Till all unweeting an enchanter bad  
His sense abus’d, and made him to misdeem  
My loyalty, not such as it did seem,  
That rather death desire than such despight.  
Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right esteem,  
How I him lov’d, and love with all my might !  
So thought I eke of him, and think I thought aright.

\* *Stowre*, blow.

## L.

"Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsook,  
 To wander, where wild Fortune would me lead,  
 And other byways he himself betook,  
 Where never foot of living wight did tread,  
 That brought not back the baleful body dead ;  
 In which him chanced false Duessa meet,  
 Mine only foe, mine only deadly dread ;  
 Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming sweet,  
 Inveigled him to follow her desires unmeet.

## LI.

"At last, by subtile sleights she him betray'd  
 Unto his foe, a giant huge and tall ;  
 Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismay'd,  
 Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall  
 The monster merciless him made to fall,  
 Whose fall did never foe before behold :  
 And now in darksome dungeon, wretched thrall,  
 Remédiless, for aye he doth him hold :  
 This is my cause of grief, more great than may be told."

## LII

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint :  
 But he her comforted, and fair bespake ;  
 "Certes, madáme, ye have great cause of plaint,  
 That stoutest heart, I ween, could cause to quake.  
 But be of cheer, and comfort to you take ;  
 For, till I have acquit your captive knight,  
 Assure your self, I will you not forsake."  
 His cheerful words reviv'd her cheerless spright  
 So forth they went, the dwarf them guiding ever right.

## CANTO VIII.

~~~~~

Fair virgin, to redeem her dear,
 Brings Arthur to the fight;
 Who slays the giant, wounds the beast,
 And strips Duessa quite.

I.

Av me, how many perils do enfold
~~Redcross knight~~
 The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
 Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
 And stedfast ~~and~~ Truth acquit him out of all!
 Her love is firm, her care continual,
 So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
 Or weakness is to sinful bands made thrall:
 Else should this Redcross knight in bands have died,
 For whose deliverance she this prince doth thither guide.

II.

They sadly travell'd thus, until they came,
 Nigh to a castle builded strong and high:
 Then cried the dwarf, "Lo! yonder is the same,
 In which my lord, my liege, doth luckless lie,
 Thrall to that giants hateful tyranny:
 Therefore, dear sir, your mighty powers assay."
 The noble knight alighted by and by
 From lofty steed, and bade the lady stay,
 To see what end of fight should him befall that day.

III.

So with his squire, th' admirer of his might,
He marched forth towards that castle wall ;
Whose gates he found fast shut, nor living wight
To ward the same, nor answer comers' call.
Then took the squire an horn of bugle small,
Which hung adown his side in twisted gold
And tassels gay : wide wonders over all
Of that same horn's great virtues weren told
Which had approved been in uses manifold.

IV.

Was never wight that heard that shrilling sound,
But trembling fear did feel in every vein :
Three miles it might be easy heard around,
And echoes three answer'd itself again :
No false enchantment, nor deceitful train,
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was void, and wholly vain :
No gate so strong, no lock so firm and fast,
But with that piercing noise flew open quite, or brast.*

V.

The same before the giant's gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the ground,
And every door of free-will open flew.
The giant's self dismayed with that sound,
Where he with his Duessa dalliance found,
In haste came rushing forth from inner bower,
With staring countenance stern, as one astound,
And staggering steps, to weet what sudden stowre
Had wrought that horror strange, and dar'd his dreaded power.

* *Brast*, burst.

VI.

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her many-headed beast ;
And every head with fiery tongue did flame,
And every head was crowned on his crest,
And bloody mouthed with late cruel feast.
That when the knight beheld, his mighty shield
Upon his manly arm he soon addrest,
And at him fiercely flew, with courage fill'd,
And eager greediness through every member thrill'd.

VII.

Therewith the giant buckled him to fight,
Inflam'd with scornful wrath and high disdain,
And lifting up his dreadful club on hight,
All armed with ragged snubs and knotty grain,
Him thought at first encounter to have slain.
But wise and wary was that noble peer ;
And, lightly leaping from so monstrous main,
Did fair avoid the violence him near ;
It bootied nought to think such thunderbolts to bear.

VIII.

Nor shame he thought to shun so hideous might :
The idle stroke, enforcing furious way,
Missing the mark of his misaimed sight,
Did fall to ground, and with his heavy sway
So deeply dinted in the driven clay,
That three yards deep a furrow up did throw :
The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay,
Did groan full grievous underneath the blow ; [show.
And, trembling with strange fear, did like an earthquake

IX.

As when almighty Jove, in wrathful mood,
To wreak the guilt of mortal sins is bent,
Hurls forth his thund'ring dart with deadly food,
Enroll'd in flames, and smould'ring dreariment,
Through riven clouds and molten firmament ;
The fierce threeforked engine making way,
Both lofty towers and highest trees hath rent,
And all that might his angry passage stay ;
And, shooting in the earth, casts up a mount of clay.

X.

His boistrous club, so buried in the ground,
He could not rearen up again so light,
But that the knight him at advantage found ;
And, whiles he strove his cumbred club to quite
Out of the earth, with blade all burning bright
He smote off his left arm, which like a block
Did fall to ground depriv'd of native might ;
Large streams of blood out of the trunked stock
Forth gushed, like fresh-water stream from riven rock.

XI.

Dismayed with so desperate deadly wound,
And eke impatient of unwonted pain,
He loudly bray'd with beastly yelling sound,
That all the fields rebellowed again :
As great a noise as when in Cymbrian plain,
An herd of bulls, whom kindly rage doth sting,
Doe for the milky mothers' want complain,
And fill the fields with troublous bellowing :
The neighbor woods around with hollow murmur ring.

XII.

That when his dear Duessa heard, and saw
 The evil stound that danger'd her estate,
 Unto his aid she hastily did draw
 Her dreadful beast ; who, swoln with blood of late,
 Came ramping forth with proud presumptuous gate,
 And threatened all his heads like flaming brands.
 But him the squire made quickly to retreat,
 Encountering fierce with single sword in hand ;
 And twixt him and his lord did like a bulwark stand.

XIII.

The proud Duessa, full of wrathful spite
 And fierce disdain, to be affronted so,
 Enfore'd her purple beast with all her might,
 That stop out of the way to overthrow,
 Scorning the let* of so unequal foe :
 But nathemore would that courageous swain
 To her yield passage, gainst his lord to go ;
 But with outrageous strokes did him restrain,
 And with his body barr'd the way atwixt them twain.

XIV.

Then took the angry witch her golden cup,
 Which still she bore, replete with magic arts ;
 " Death and despair did many thereof sup, "
 And secret poison through their inner parts ;
 Th' eternal bale of heavy wounded hearts :
 Which, after charms and some enchantments said,
 She lightly sprinkled on his weaker parts :
 Therewith his sturdy courage soon was quay'd,†
 And all his senses were with sudden dread dismay'd.

* *Let*, hindrance, or opposition.

† *Quay'd*, quelled.

XV.

So down he fell before the cruel beast,
Who on his neck his bloody claws did seize,
That life nigh crush'd out of his panting breast ;
No power he had to stir, nor will to rise.
That when the careful knight gan well advise,*
He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,
And to the beast gan turn his enterprise ;
For wondrous anguish in his heart it wrought,
To see his loved squire into such thraldom brought ;

XVI.

And, high advancing his blood-thirsty blade,
Struke one of those deformed heads so sore,
That of his puissance proud ensample made ;
His monstrous scalp down to his teeth it tore,
And that misformed shape misshaped more :
A sea of blood gush'd from the gaping wound,
That her gay garments stain'd with filthy gore,
And overflowed all the field around ;
That over shoes in blood he waded on the ground.

XVII.

Thereat he roared for exceeding pain,
That, to have heard, great horror would have bred ;
And scourging th' empty air with his long train,
Through great impatience of his grieved head,
His gorgeous rider from her lofty sted
Would have cast down, and trod in dirty mire,
Had not the giant soon her succored ;
Who all enrag'd with smart and frantic ire,
Came hurtling in, full fierce, and forc'd the knight retire.

* *Advise*, perceive.

XVIII.

The force, which wont in two to be disperst,
In one alone left hand he now unites,
Which is through rage more strong than both were erst ;
With which his hideous club aloft he dites,*
And at his foe with furious rigor smites,
That strongest oak might seem to overthrow :
The stroke upon his shield so heavy lights,
That to the ground it doubleth him full low :—
What mortal wight could ever bear so monstrous blow ?

XIX.

And in his fall his shield, that covered was,
Did loose his veil by chance, and open flew ;
The light whereof, that heaven's light did pass
Such blazing brightness through the ayër threw,
That eye might not the same endure to view.
Which when the giant spied with staring eye,
He down let fall his arm, and soft withdrew
His weapon huge, that heaved was on high
For to have slain the man, that on the ground did lie.

XX.

And eke the fruitful-headed beast, amaz'd
At flashing beams of that sunshiny shield,
Became stark blind, and all his senses daz'd,
That down he tumbled on the dirty field,
And seem'd himself as conquered to yield.
Whom when his mistress proud perceiv'd to fall,
Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintness reel'd,
Unto the giant loudly she gan call :
“O ! help, Orgoglio ; help, or else we perish all.”

* *Dites*, directs.

XXI.

At her so piteous cry was much amov'd
Her champion stout ; and, for to aid his friend,
Again his wonted angry weapon prov'd,
But all in vain : for he has read his end
In that bright shield, and all their forces spend
Themselves in vain : for, since that glancing sight,
He hath no power to hurt, nor to defend,
As where th' Almighty's lightning brand does light,
It dims the dazed eyes, and daunts the senses quite.

XXII.

Whom when the prince, to battle new addrest
And threatening high his dreadful stroke, did see,
His sparkling blade about his head he blest,
And smote off quite his left leg by the knee,
That down he tumbled ; as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift,
Whose heart-strings with keen steel nigh hewen be ;
The mighty trunk half rent with ragged rift
Doth roll adown the rocks, and fall with fearful drift.

XXIII.

Or as a castle, reared high and round,
By subtile engines and malicious slight
Is undermined from the lowest ground,
And her foundation forc'd and feebled quite,
At last down falls ; and with her heaped height,
Her hasty ruin does more heavy make,
And yields itself unto the victor's might :
Such was this giant's fall, that seem'd to shake
The steadfast globe of earth, as it for fear did quake.

XXIV.

The knight then, lightly leaping to the prey,
 With mortal steel him smote again so sore,
 That headless his unwieldy body lay,
 All wallow'd in his own foul bloody gore,
 Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store.
 But, soon as breath out of his breast did pass,
 That huge great body, which the giant bore,
 Was vanish'd quite ; and of that monstrous mass
 Was nothing left, but like an empty bladder was.

XXV.

Whose grievous fall when false Duessa spied,
 Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,
 And crowned mitre rudely threw aside :
 Such piercing grief her stubborn heart did wound,
 That she could not endure that doleful stound ;*
 But, leaving all behind her, fled away :
 The light-foot squire her quickly turn'd around,
 And by hard means enforcing her to stay,
 So brought unto his lord, as his deserved prey.

XXVI.

The royal virgin which beheld from far,
 In pensive plight and sad perplexity,
 The whole achievement of this doubtful war,
 Came running fast to greet his victory,
 With sober gladness and mild modesty ;
 And, with sweet joyous cheer, him thus bespake :
 " Fair branch of noblesse, flower of chivalry,
That with your worth the world amazed make,
 How shall I quite† the pains ye suffer for my sake ?

* Stound, blow.

† Quite, requite.

arch

XXVII.

“ And you, fresh bud of virtue springing fast,
 Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto Death’s doore,
 What hath poor virgin for such peril past
 Wherewith you to reward ? Accept therefore
 My simple self, and service evermore.
 And He that high does sit, and all things see
 With equal eye, their merits to restore,
 Behold what ye this day have done for me ;
 And, what I cannot quite, requite with usury !

XXVIII.

“ But sith* the heavens, and your fair handeling,
 Have made you master of the field this day ;
 Your fortune master eke with governing,
 And, well begun, end all so well, I pray !
 Nor let that wicked woman scape away ;
 For she it is, that did my lord bethral,
 My dearest lord, and deep in dungeon lay ;
 Where he his better days hath wasted all :
 O hear, how piteous he to you for aid does call !”

XXIX.

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his squire,
 The false Duess’ to keepen carefully ;
 Whiles he himself with greedy great desire
 Into the castle entered forcibly,
 Where living creature none he did espy ;
 Then gan he loudly through the house to call ;
 But no man car’d to answer to his cry ;
 There reign’d a solemn silence over all ;
 Nor voice was heard nor wight was seen in bower or hall !

* *Sith*, since.

XXX.

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth came
An old, old man, with beard as white as snow ;
That on a staff his feeble steps did frame,
And guide his weary gait both to and fro ;
For his eye-sight him failed long ago :
And on his arm a bunch of keys he bore,
The which unused rust did overgrow :
Those were the keys of every inner door ;
But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

Blue
Ignaro

XXXI.

But very uncouth sight was to behold,
How he did fashion his untoward pace ;
For as he forward mov'd his footing old,
So backward still was turn'd his wrinkled face ;
Unlike to men who ever, as they trace,
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
This was the ancient keeper of that place,
And foster-father of the giant dead ;
His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

XXXII.

His reverend hairs and holy gravity
The knight much honor'd, as beseemed well ;
And gently ask'd where all the people be,
Which in that stately building wont to dwell :
Who answered him full soft, *He could not tell*,
Again he ask'd, where that same knight was laid,
Whom great Orgoglio with his púissance fell .
He made his caitive thrall : again he said,
He could not tell ; nor ever other answer made.

XXXIII.

Then asked he, which way he in might pass,
He could not tell, again he answered.
Thereat, the courteous knight displeased was,
And said ; “ Old sire, it seems thou hast not read
How ill it sits with that same silver head,
In vain to mock, or mock’d in vain to be ;
But if thou be, as thou art pourtrayed
With Nature’s pen, in age’s grave degree,
Aread in graver wise what I demand of thee.”

XXXIV.

His answer likewise was, *He could not tell*.
Whose senseless speech and doted ignorance,
Whenas the noble prince had marked well,
He guess’d his nature by his countenance ;
And calm’d his wrath with goodly temperance.
Then to him stepping, from his arm did reach
Those keys, and made himself free enterance.
Each door he opened without any breach :
There was no bar to stop, nor foe him to impeach.

XXXV.

There all within full rich array’d he found,
With royal arras, and resplendent gold,
And did with store of everything abound,
That greatest prince’s presence might behold,
But all the floor (too filthy to be told)
With blood of guiltless babes, and innocents true,
Which there were slain, as sheep out of the fold,
Defiled was ; that dreadful was to view ;
And sacred ashes over it was strowed new.

XXXVI.

And there beside a marble stone was built
An altar, carv'd with cunning imagery ;
On which true Christians' blood was often spilt,
And holy martyrs often done to die,
With cruel malice and strong tyranny ;
Whose blessed sprites, from underneath the stone,
To God for vengeance cried continually ;
And with great grief were often heard to groan ;
That hardest heart would bleed to hear their piteous moan.

XXXVII.

Through every room he sought, and every bower,
But nowhere could he find that woful thrall.
At last he came unto an iron door
That fast was lock'd ; but key found not at all
Amongst that bunch to open it withal ;
But in the same a little grate was pight,*
Through which he sent his voice, and loud did call
With all his power, to weet if living wight
Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen might.

XXXVIII.

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voice
These piteous plaints and dolours did resound ;
“ O ! who is that, which brings me happy choice
Of death, that here lie dying every stound,
Yet live perforce in baleful darkness bound ?
For now three moons have changed thrice their hue,
And have been thrice hid underneath the ground
Since I the heavens' cheerful face did view :
O welcome, thou, that dost of death bring tidings true !

XXXIX.

Which when that champion heard, with piercing point
Of pity dear his heart was thrilled sore ;
And trembling horror ran through every joint
For ruth of gentle knight so foul forlore :
Which shaking off, he rent that iron door
With furious* force and indignation fell ;
Where entered in, his foot could find no floor,
But all a deep descent, as dark as hell,
That breathed ever forth a filthy baneful smell.

XL.

But neither darkness foul, nor filthy bands,
Nor noxious smell, his purpose could withhold
(Entire affection hateth nicer hands),
But that with constant zeal and courage bold,
After long pains and labors manifold,
He found the means that prisoner up to rear ;
Whose feeble thighs, unable to uphold
His pined corse, him scarce to light could bear ;
A rueful spectacle of death and ghastly drear.

XLI.

His sad dull eyes, deep sunk in hollow pits,
Could not endure th' unwonted sun to view ;
His bare thin cheeks for want of better bits,
And empty sides deceived of their due,
Could make a stony heart his hap to rue ;
His rawbone arms, whose mighty brawned bow'rs
Were wont to rive steel plates, and helmets hew,
Were clean consum'd ; and all his vital powers
Decay'd ; and all his flesh shrunk up like wither'd flowers.

* *Pight*, made.

XLII.

Whom when his lady saw, to him she ran
 With hasty joy : to see him made her glad,
 And sad to view his visage pale and wan ;
 Who erst in flowers of freshest youth was clad.
 Tho* when her well of tears she wasted had,
 She said : " Ah, dearest lord ! what evil star
 On you hath frown'd, and poured his influence bad,
 That of yourself ye thus berobbed are,
 And this misseeming hue your manly looks doth mar ?

XLIII.

" But welcome now, my lord, in weal or woe,
 Whose presence I have lack'd too long a day :
 And fie on fortune mine avowed foe,
 Whose wrathful wreaks themselves do now alay ;
 And for these wrongs shall treble penance pay
 Of treble good : good grows of evil prief."†
 The cheerless man, whom sorrow did dismay,
 Had no delight to treaten of his grief ;
 His long endured famine needed more relief.

XLIV.

" Fair lady," then said that victorious knight,
 " The things, that grievous were to do, or bear,
 Them to renew, I wot, breeds no delight :
 Best music breeds delight in loathing ear :
 But th' only good, that grows of passed fear,
 Is to be wise, and ware of like again,
 This day's ensample hath this lesson dear
 Deep written in my heart with iron pen,
That bliss may not abide in state of mortal men."

* *Tho*, then.† *Prief*, endured.

XLV.

“Henceforth, sir knight, take to you wonted strength,
And master these mishaps with patient might :
Lo, where your foe lies stretch’d in monstrous length ;
And lo, that wicked woman in your sight,
The root of all your care and wretched plight,
Now in your power, to let her live or die.”
“To do her die,” quoth Una, “were despite,
And shame t’ avenge so weak an enemy ;
But spoil her of her scarlet robe, and let her fly.”

* * * *

Then follows a description of the appearance of the false witch Duessa after she was stript of her fair seeming shew. The images employed by the poet to give the most odious possible idea of Falsehood, are too disagreeable to extract. Here we have her fate : Deceit no longer walks boldly, but hides in dens and caves.

L.

She, flying fast from heaven’s hated face,
And from the world that her discovered wide,
Fled to the wasteful wilderness apace,
From living eyes her open shame to hide ;
And lurk in rocks and caves, long unespied.
But that fair crew of knights, and Una fair,
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest themselves, and weary powers repair,
Where store they found of all that dainty was and rare.

CANTO IX.

His loves and lineage Arthur tells :
 The knights knit friendly bands :
 Sir Trevisan flies from Despair,
 Whom Redcross knight withstands.

I.

O! GOODLY golden chain, wherewith yfere*
 The virtues linked are in lovely wise ;
 And noble minds of yore allied were,
 In brave pursuit of chivalrous emprise,
 That none did other's safety despise,
 Nor aid envy to him in need that stands ;
 But friendly each did others praise devise,
 How to advance with favorable hands,
 As this good prince redeem'd the Redcross knight from bands.

II.

Who when their powers, impair'd through labor long,
 With due repast they had recured well,
 And that weak captive wight now waxed strong ;
 Them list no longer there at leisure dwell,
 But forward fare, as their adventures fell :
 But, ere they parted, Una fair besought
That stranger knight his name and nation tell ;
 Lest so great good, as he for her had wrought,
 Should die unknown, and buried be in thankless thought.

* Yfere, together.

III.

“Fair virgin,” said the prince, “ye me require
 A thing without the compass of my wit:
 For both the lineage, and the certain sire,
 From which I sprung, from me are hidden yet.
 For all so soon as life did me admit
 Into this world, and showed heaven’s light,
 From mother’s breast I taken was unfit,
 And straight deliver’d to a Faëry knight,
 To be upbrought in gentle thewes and martial might.

IV.

“Unto old Timon he me brought bilive,*
 Old Timon, who in youthly years hath been
 In warlike feats th’ expertest man alive,
 And is the wisest now on earth I ween:
 His dwelling is, low in a valley green,
 Under the foot of Rauran mossy hoar,
 From whence the river Dee, as silver clean,
 His tumbling billows rolls with gentle roar;
 There all my days he train’d me up in virtuous lore.

V.

“Hither the great magician Merlin came,
 As was his use, oftentimes to visit me;
 For he had charge my discipline to frame,
 And tutor’s nouriture† to oversee.
 Him oft and oft I ask’d in privacy,
 Of what loins and what lineage I did spring,
 Whose answer bade me still assured be,
 That I was son and heir unto a king,
 As time in her just term the truth to light should bring.”

* *Bilive*, immediately. † *Nouriture*, nourishment, whether of mind or body.

VI.

"Well worthy imp,"* said then the lady gent,†
 "And pupil fit for such a tutor's hand!
 But what adventure, or what high intent,
 Hath brought you hither into Faëry land,
 Aread,‡ Prince Arthur, crown of martial band?"
 "Full hard it is," quoth he, "to read aright
 The course of heavenly cause, or understand
 The secret meaning of th' Eternal Might,
 That rules men's ways, and rules the thoughts of living wight."

VII.

"For whether He, through fatal deep foresight,
 Me hither sent, for cause to me unguess'd;
 Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
 Whilome doth rankle in my riven breast,
 With forced fury following his behest,
 Me hither brought by ways yet never found;
 You to have help'd I hold myself yet blest."
 "Ah! courteous knight," quoth she, "what secret wound
 Could ever find to grieve the gentlest heart on ground?"

VIII.

"Dear dame," quoth he, "you sleeping sparks awake,
 Which, troubled once, into huge flames will grow;
 Nor ever will their fervent fury slake,
 Till living moisture into smoke do flow,
 And wasted life do lie in ashes low.
 Yet sithens§ silence lesseneth not my fire,
 But, told, it flames; and, hidden, it does glow;
 I will reveal what ye so much desire:
 Ah! Love, lay down thy bow, the whiles I may respire."

* *Imp*, child or offspring.

† *Gent*, gentle.

‡ *Aread*, explain.

§ *Sithens*, since.

IX.

“It was in freshest flower of youthly years,
When courage first does creep in manly chest;
Then first that coal of kindly heat appears
To kindle love in every living breast:
But me had warn’d old Timon’s wise behest,
Those creeping flames by reason to subdue,
Before their rage grew to so great unrest,
As miserable lovers use to rue,
Which still wax old in woe, while woe still waxeth new.

X.

“That idle name of love, and lovers’ life,
As loss of time, and virtue’s enemy,
I ever scorn’d, and joy’d to stir up strife,
In midst of their mournful tragedy;
Ay wont to laugh, when them I heard to cry,
And blow the fire, which them to ashes brent.*
Their god himself, griev’d at my liberty,
Shot many a dart at me with fierce intent;
But I them warded all with wary government.

XI.

“But all in vain; no fort can be so strong,
Nor fleshly breast can armed be so sound,
But will at last be won with battery long,
Or unawares at disadvantage found:
Nothing is sure that grows on earthly ground.
And who most trusts in arm of fleshly might,
And boasts in beauty’s chain not to be bound,
Doth soonest fall in disadvent’rous fight,
And yields his caitive neck to victor’s most despite.

* *Brent*, burnt.

XII.

“Ensample make of him your hapless joy,
And of myself now mated, as you see ;
Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging boy
Did soon pluck down, and curb’d my liberty.
For on a day, prick’d forth with jollity
Of looser life and heat of hardiment,
Ranging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heavens, with one consent,
Did seem to laugh on me, and favor mine intent.

XIII.

“Forwearied with my sports, I did alight
From lofty steed, and down to sleep me laid :
The verdant grass my couch did goodly dight,
And pillow was my helmet fair display’d :
Whiles every sense the humor sweet embay’d,
And slumbering soft my heart did steal away,
Me seemed, by my side a royal maid
Her dainty limbs full softly down did lay :
So fair a creature yet saw never sunny day.

XIV.

“Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment
She to me made, and bad me love her dear ;
For dearly sure her love was to me bent,
As, when just time expired, should appear.
But, whether dreams delude, or true it were,
Was never heart so ravish’d with delight,
Nor living man like words did ever hear,
As she to me delivered all that night ;
And at her parting said, she Queen of Faëries hight.

XV.

"When I awoke, and found her place devoid,
 And nought but pressed grass where she had lyen,
 I sorrowed all so much as erst I joy'd,
 And washed all her place with watry eyen.
 From that day forth I lov'd that face divine;
 From that day forth I cast in careful mind,
 To seek her out with labor and long tyne,
 And never vow'd to rest till her I find;
 Nine months I seek in vain, yet ni'll* that vow unbind."

XVI.

Thus as he spake, his visage waxed pale,
 And change of hue great passion did betray;
 Yet still he strove to cloak his inward bale,
 And hide the smoke that did his fire display;
 Till gentle Una thus to him gan say;
 "O happy Queen of Faëries, that hast found,
 Mongst many one that with his prowess may
 Defend thine honor, and thy foes confound!
 True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on ground."

XVII.

"Thine, O! then," said the gentle Redcross knight,
 "Next to that lady's love, shall be the place,
 O fairest virgin, full of heavenly ~~light~~
 Whose wondrous faith exceeding earthly race,
 Was firmest fixt in mine extremest case.
 And you, my lord, the patron of my life,
 Of that great queen may well gain worthy grace;
 For only worthy you through prowess prief,†
 If living man might worthie be, to be her lief."‡

* *Will*, will not.† *Prief*, proved.‡ *Lief*, love.

The character of Prince Arthur, though primarily intended as the personification of pure chivalry, has been supposed to have had also a flattering reference to the splendid Leicester, who was lord of the ascendant with Elizabeth at the time the poem was written. This supposition being admitted, the vision of the Faëry Queen just recounted would obviously refer to the hopes of the favorite, who is known to have aspired to the crown matrimonial. The last four lines, in particular, sound like a piece of delicate flattery, addressed, directly enough, by the poet to Leicester himself.

XVIII.

So diversely discoursing of their loves,
 The golden sun his glist'ring head gan shew,
 And sad remembrance now the prince amoves
 With fresh desire his voyage to pursue ;
 Als* Una yearn'd her travel to renew.
 Then those two knights, fast friendship for to bind,
 And lov^e establish each to other true,
 Gave goodly gifts, the signs of grateful mind,
 And eke, as pledges firm, right hands together join'd.

XIX.

Prince Arthur gave a box of diamond sure,
 Embow'd with gold and gorgeous ornament,
 Wherein were clos'd few drops of liquor pure,
 Of wondrous worth, and virtue excellent,
 That any wound could heal incontinent.
 Which to requite, the Redcross knight him gave
 A book, wherein his Saviour's Testament
 Was writ with golden letters rich and brave ;
 A work of wondrous grace, and able souls to save.

* *Als*, also

XX.

Thus been they parted ; Arthur on his way
To seek his love, and th' other for to fight
With Una's foe, that all her realm did prey.
But she, now weighing the decayed plight
And shrunken sinews of her chosen knight,
Would not a while her forward course pursue
Nor bring him forth in face of dreadful fight,
Till he recover'd had his former hue,
For him to be yet weak and weary well she knew.

XXI.

So as they travell'd, lo ! they gan espy
An armed knight towards them gallop fast,
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
Or other grisly thing, that him aghast.
Still, as he fled, his eye was backward cast,
As if his fear still followed him behind :
Als flew his steed, as he his bands had brast,*
And with his winged heels did tread the wind,
As he had been a foal of Pegasus his kind.

XXII.

Nigh as he drew, he might perceive his head
To be unarm'd, and curl'd uncombed hairs
Upstaring stiff, dismay'd with uncouth dread :
Nor drop of blood in all his face appears,
Nor life in limb ; and to increase his fears,
In foul reproach of knighthood's fair degree,
About his neck an hempen rope he wears,
That with his glist'ring arms does ill agree :
But he of rope, or arms, has now no memory.

* *Brast*, burst.

XXIII.

The Redcross knight toward him crossed fast,
 To weet what mister* wight was so dismay'd :
 There him he finds all senseless and aghast,
 That of himself he seem'd to be afraid ;
 Whom hardly he from flying forward staid,
 Till he these words to him deliver might ;
 " Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus array'd,
 And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight ?
 For never knight I saw in such misseeming plight."

XXIV.

He answer'd nought at all ; but adding new
 Fear to his first amazement, staring wide
 With stony eyes and heartless hollow hue,
 Astonish'd stood as one that had espied
 Infernal Furies with their chains untied.
 Him yet again, and yet again, bespoke
 The gentle knight : who nought to him replied ;
 But trembling every joint did inly quake,
 And falt'ring tongue at last these words seem'd forth to shake ;

XXV.

" For God's dear love, sir knight, do me not stay ;
 For lo ! he comes, he comes fast after me !
 Eft† looking back would fain have run away :
 But he him forc'd to stay, and tellen free
 The secret cause of his perplexity :
 Yet nãthẽmore by his bold hearty speech
 Could his blood-frozen heart emboldened be,
 But through his boldness rather fear did reach ;
 Yet, forc'd, at last he made through silence sudden breach :

* *Mister*, sort or kind.† *Eft*, again.

XXVI.

“And am I now in safety sure,” quoth he,
“From him, that would have forced me to die?
And is the point of death now turned from me,
That I may tell this hapless history?”
“Fear nought,” quoth he, “no danger now is nigh.”
“Then shall I you recount a rueful case,”
Said he, “the which with this unlucky eye
I late beheld; and, had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had been partaker of the place.”

XXVII.

“I lately chanc’d (would I had never chanc’d!)
With a fair knight to keepen company,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himself advanc’d
In all affairs, and was both bold and free;
But not so happy as might happy be:
He lov’d as was his lot, a lady gent,
That him again lov’d in the least degree;
For she was proud, and of too high intent,
And joy’d to see her lover languish and lament:

XXVIII.

“From whom returning sad and comfortless,
As on the way together we did fare,
We met that villain (God from him me bless!)
That cursed wight, from whom I scap’d whylere,
A man of hell, that calls himself *Despair*;
Who first us greets, and after fair aredes
Of tidings strange, and of adventures rare:
So creeping close, as snake in hidden weeds,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deeds.”

XXIX.

“ Which when he knew, and felt our feeble hearts
Embost with bale,* and bitter biting grief,
Which Love had launched with his deadly darts ;
With wounding words and terms of foul reprief,
He pluckt from us all hope of due relief,
That erst us held in love of lingring life :
Then hopeless, heartless, gan the cunning thief
Persuade us die, to stint all further strife ;
To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty knife :

XXX.

“ With which sad instrument of hasty death,
That woful lover loathing longer light,
A wide way made to let forth living breath.
But I, more fearful or more lucky wight,
Dismay’d with that deformed dismal sight,
Fled fast away, half dead with dying fear ;
Nor yet assur’d of life by you, sir knight,
Whose like infirmity like chance may bear :
But God you never let his charmed speeches hear !”

XXXI.

“ How may a man,” said he, “ with idle speech,
Be won to spoil the castle of his health ?”
“ I wot,” quoth he, “ whom trial late did teach,
That like would not for all this worldës wealth.
His subtile tongue like dropping honey, melt’h
Into the heart, and searcheth every vein ;
That, ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His power is reft and weakness doth remain.
O never, sir, desire to try his guileful train !”

* *Bale*, sorrow.

XXXII.

“Certes,” said he, “hence shall I never rest,
Till I that treachour’s art have heard and tried :
And you, sir knight, whose name might I request,
Of grace do me unto his cabin guide.”
“I, that hight Trevisan,” quoth he, “will ride,
Against my liking, back to do you grace :
But not for gold nor glee will I abide
By you, when ye arrive in that same place :
For liever had I die than see his deadly face.”

XXXIII.

Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy cliff ypight,*
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcasses doth crave :
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owl,
Shrieking his baleful note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other cheerful fowl :
And all about it wandering ghosts did wail and howl :

XXXIV.

And all about old stocks and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees ;
On which had many wretches hanged been,
Whose carcasses were scattered on the green,
And thrown about the cliffs. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and doleful teen,
Would fain have fled, nor durst approachen near,
But th’ other forc’d him stay, and comforted in fear.

* *Ypight*, placed.

XXXV.

That darksome cave they enter where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind :
His grisly locks, long growen and unbound,
Disorder'd hung about his shoulders round,
And hid his face ; through which his hollow eyne*
Look deadly dull, and stared as astound ;
His raw-bone cheeks, through penury and pine,
Were shrunk into his jaws, as he did never dine.

XXXVI.

His garment, nought but many ragged clouts,
With thorns together pinn'd and patched was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts :
And him beside there lay upon the grass
A dreary corse whose life away did pass,
All wallowed in his own yet lukewarm blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas !
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

XXXVII.

Which piteous spectacle, approving true
The woeful tale that Trevisan had told,
Whenas the gentle Redcross knight did view ;
With fiery zeal he burnt in courage bold
Him to avenge, before his blood were cold ;
And to the villain said ; "Thou damned wight,
The author of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee right,
With thine own blood to price his blood, here shed in sight ?"

* *Eyne*, eyes.

XXXVIII.

“What frantic fit,” quoth he, “hath thus distraught
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doom to give ?
What justice ever other judgment taught,
But he should die, who merits not to live ?
None else to death this man despairing drive
But his own guilty mind, deserving death.
Is’t then unjust to each his due to give ?
Or let him die, that loatheth living breath ?
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here uneath ?*

XXXIX.

“Who travels by the weary wandring way,
To come unto his wished home in haste,
And meets a flood, that doth his passage stay ;
Is’t not great grace to help him over past,
Or free his feet that in the mire stick fast ?
Most envious man, that grieves at neighbours good .
And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast ;
Why wilt not let him pass, that long hath stood
Upon the bank, yet wilt thyself not pass the flood ?

XL.

“He there does now enjoy eternal rest
And happy ease, which thou dost want and crave,
And further from it daily wanderest ;
What if some little pain the passage gave,
That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave ;
Is not short pain well borne, that brings long ease,
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave :
Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please.”

* *Uneath*, below.

XLI.

The knight much wondred at his sudden wit,
And said ; " The term of life is limited,
Nor may a man prolong, nor shorten, it :
The soldier may not move from watchful sted,
Nor leave his stand until his captain bid."
" Who life did limit by Almighty doom,"
Quoth he, " knows best the terms established :
And he that points the sentinel his room,
Doth license him depart at sound of morning droom.*

XLII.

" Is not His deed, whatever thing is done
In heaven and earth ? Did not He all create
To die again ? All ends, that was begun :
Their times in his eternal book of fate
Are written sure, and have their certain date.
Who then can strive with strong necessity,
That holds the world in his still changing state ;
Or shun the death ordain'd by destiny ?
When hour of death is come, let none ask whence, nor why.

XLIII.

" The longer life, I wot the greater sin ;
The greater sin, the greater punishment :
All those great battles, which thou boasts to win
Through strife, and blood-shed, and avengement,
Now prais'd, hereafter dear thou shalt repent :
For life must life, and blood must blood, repay.
Is not enough thy evil life forespent ?
For he that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth go, the further he doth stray.

* *Droom*, drum.

XLIV.

“ Then do no further go, no further stray ;
But here lie down, and to thy rest betake,
Th’ ill to prevent, that life ensuen may.
For what hath life, that may it loved make,
And gives not rather cause it to forsake ?
Fear, sickness, age, loss, labor, sorrow, strife,
Pain, hunger, cold that makes the heart to quake ;
And ever fickle fortune rageth rife ;
All which, and thousands more, do make a loathsome life.

XLV.

“ Thou, wretched man, of death hast greatest need,
If in true balance thou wilt weigh thy state ;
For never knight, that dared warlike deed,
More luckless adventures did amate :
Witness the dungeon deep, wherein of late
Thy life shut up for death so oft did call ;
And though good luck prolonged hath thy date,
Yet death then would the like mishap forestal,
Into the which hereafter thou mayst happen fall.

XLVI.

“ Why then dost thou, O man of sin, desire
To draw thy days forth to their last degree ?
Is not the measure of thy sinful hire
High heaped up with huge iniquity,
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee ?
Is’t not enough, that to thy lady mild
Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjury,
And sold thyself to serve Duessa vild,
With whom in all abuse thou hast thyself defil’d ?

XLVII.

“Is not he just, that all this doth behold
From highest heaven, and bears an equal eye?
Shall he thy sins up in his knowledge fold,
And guilty be of thine impiety?
Is not his law, Let every sinner die,
Die shall all flesh? What then must needs be done,
Is it not better to do willingly,
Than linger till the glass be all outrun?
Death is the end of woes: Die soon, O Faëry’s son.”

XLVIII.

The knight was much enmovéd with his speech,
That as a sword’s point through his heart did pierce,
And in his conscience made a secret breach,
Well knowing true all that he did rehearse,
And to his fresh remembrance did reverse
The ugly view of his deformed crimes;
That all his manly powers it did disperse,
As he were charmed with enchanted rhymes;
That oftentimes he quak’d, and fainted oftentimes.

XLIX.

In which amazement when the miscreant
Perceived him to waver weak and frail,
Whiles trembling horror did his conscience daunt,
And hellish anguish did his soul assail;
To drive him to despair, and quite to quail,
He show’d him painted in a table plain
The damned ghosts, that do in torments wail,
And thousand fiends, that do them endless pain
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remain.

L.

The sight whereof so throughly him dismay'd,
That nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almighty's law.
Then gan the villain him to overcrow,
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw ;
And bad him choose, what death he would desire :
For death was due to him, that had provok'd Gods ire.

LI.

But, whenas none of them he saw him take,
He to him brought a dagger sharp and keen,
And gave it him in hand : his hand did quake
And tremble like a leaf of aspen green,
And troubled blood through his pale face was seen
To come and go, with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been.
At last resolv'd to work his final smart,
He lifted up his hand, that back again did start.

LII.

Which whenas Una saw, through every vein
The curdled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swoon : but soon reliev'd again,
Out of his hand she snatch'd the cursed knife,
And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said ; " Fie, fie, faint-hearted knight,
What meanest thou by this reproachful strife,
Is this the battle, which thou vauntst to fight
With that fire-mouthed dragon, horrible and bright ?

LIII.

“Come ; come away, frail, feeble, fleshly wight,
Nor let vain words bewitch thy manly heart,
Nor devilish thoughts dismay thy constant spright :
In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part ?
Why shouldst thou then despair, that chosen art ?
Where justice grows, there grows eke greater grace,
The which doth quench the brand of hellish smart,
And that accurst hand-writing doth deface :
Arise, sir knight ; arise, and leave this cursed place.”

LIV.

So up he rose, and thence amounted straight.
Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest
Would safe depart, for all his subtile sleight ;
He chose an halter from among the rest,
And with it hung himself, unbid, unblest.
But death he could not work himself thereby,
For thousand times he so himself had drest,
Yet nathëless it could not do him die,
Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

CANTO X.



Her faithful knight fair Una brings
To house of Holiness:
Where he is taught repentance, and
The way to heavenly bliss.

I.

WHAT man is he, that boasts of fleshly might
And vain assurance of mortality,
Which, all so soon as it doth come to fight,
Against spiritual foes, yields by and by,
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly!
Nor let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory:
If any strength we have, it is to ill;
But all the good is God's, both power and eke will.

II.

By that which lately happen'd, Una saw
That this her knight was feeble, and too faint;
And all his sinews waxen weak and raw,
Through long imprisonment, and hard constraint,
Which he endured in his late restraint,
That yet he was unfit for bloody fight.
Therefore to cherish him with diets daint,
She cast to bring him, where he chearen might,
Till he recovered had his late decayed plight.

III.

There was an ancient house not far away,
 Renown'd throughout the world for sacred lore
 And pure unspotted life : so well, they say,
 It govern'd was, and guided evermore,
 Through wisdom of a matron grave and hoar ;
 Whose only joy was to relieve the needs
 Of wretched souls, and help the helpless poor :
 All night she spent in telling of her beads,
 And all the day in doing good and godly deeds.

IV.

Dame Cælia men did her call, as thought
 From heaven to come, or thither to arise ;
 The mother of three daughters well upbrought
 In goodly thewes, and godly exercise :
 The eldest two, most sober, chaste, and wise,
 Fidelia and Speranza, virgins were ;
 Though spous'd, yet wanting wedlock's solemnize ;
 But fair Charissa to a lovely fere*
 Was linked, and by him had many pledges dear.

V.

Arrived there, the door they find fast lock'd ;
 For it was warely watched night and day,
 For fear of many foes ; but, when they knock'd,
 The porter open'd unto them straight way.
 He was an aged sire, all hoary gray,
 With looks full lowly cast, and gait full slow,
 Wont on a staff his feeble steps to stay,
 Hight† Humiltà. They pass in, stooping low ;
 For straight and narrow was the way which he did show.

* *Fere*, lover.† *Hight*, called.

VI.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin ;
But, enter'd in, a spacious court they see,
Both plain and pleasant to be walked in ;
Where them does meet a franklin fair and free,
And entertains with comely courteous glee ;
His name was Zeal, that him right well became :
For in his speeches and behavior he
Did labour lively to express the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the hall they came.

VII.

There fairly them receives a gentle squire,
Of mild demeanor and rare courtesy
Right cleanly clad in comely sad* attire ;
In word and deed that show'd great modesty,
And knew his good to all of each degree ;
Hight Reverence : he them with speeches meet
Does fair entreat ; no courting nicety,
But simple, true, and eke unfained sweet,
As might become a squire so great persons to greet.

VIII.

And afterwards them to his dame he leads,
That aged dame, the lady of the place,
Who all this while was busy at her beads ;
Which done, she up arose with seemly grace,
And toward them full matronly did pace.
Where, when that fairest Una she beheld,
Whom well she knew to spring from heavenly race,
Her heart with joy unwonted inly swell'd,
As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker eld :

* *Sad*, sober.

IX.

And, her embracing, said ; " O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread !
Most virtuous virgin, born of heavenly birth,
That, to redeem thy woful parents' head
From tyrant's rage and ever-dying dread,
Hast wander'd through the world now long a day,
Yet ceasest not thy weary soles to lead ;
What grace hath thee now hither brought this way ?
Or do thy feeble feet unweeting hither stray ?

X.

" Strange thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place ; or any other wight,
That hither turns his steps : so few there be,
That choose the narrow path, or seek the right !
All keep the broad highway, and take delight
With many rather for to go astray,
And be partakers of their evil plight,
Than with a few to walk the rightest way :
O ! foolish men, why haste ye to your own decay ?"

XI.

" Thyself to see, and tired limbs to rest,
O matron sage," quoth she, " I hither came ;
And this good knight his way with me addrest,
Led with thy praises, and broad-blazed fame,
That up to heaven is blown." The ancient dame
Him goodly greeted in her modest guise,
And entertain'd them both, as best became,
With all the court'sies that she could devise,
Nor wanted ought to show her bounteous or wise.

XII.

Thus as they gan of sundry things devise,
Lo! two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinkéd arm in arm in lovely wise ;
With countenance demure and modest grace,
They number'd even steps and equal pace :
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny beams threw from her chrystal face
That could have daz'd* the rash beholder's sight,
And round about her head did shine like heaven's light.

XIII.

She was arrayed all in lily white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
With wine and water fill'd up to the height,
In which a sērpent did himself enfold,
That horror made to all that did behold ;
But she no whit did change her constant mood,
And in her other hand she fast did hold
A book, that was both sign'd and seal'd with blood :
Wherein dark things were writ, hard to be understood.

XIV.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blue, that her beseemed well ;
Not all so cheerful seemed she of sight,
As was her sister ; whether dread did dwell
Or anguish in her heart, is hard to tell :
Upon her arm a silver anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned ever, as befel ;
And ever up to heaven, as she did pray,
Her steadfast eyes were bent, nor swervéd other way ;

* *Daz'd*, dazzled.

XV.

They, seeing Una, towards her gan wend,
 Who them encounters with like courtesy ;
 Many kind speeches they between them spend,
 And greatly joy each other for to see :
 Then to the knight with shamefast modesty
 They turn themselves, at Una's meek request,
 And him salute with well beseeming glee ;
 Who fair them quits, as him beseemed best,
 And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.*

* * * * *

XVII.

Then said the aged Cælia : " Dear dame,
 And you, good sir, I wot that of your toil
 And labors long, through which ye hither came,
 Ye both forwearied be : therefore a while
 I read you rest, and to your bowers recoil."
 Then called she a groom, that forth him led
 Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoil
 Of puissant arms, and laid in easy bed :
 His name was meek Obedience rightfully aredd.†

XVIII.

Now when their weary limbs with kindly rest,
 And bodies were refresh'd with due repast,
 Fair Una gan Fidelia fair request,
 To have her knight into her schoolhouse plac'd,
 That of her heavenly learning he might taste,
 And hear the wisdom of her words divine.
 She granted : and that knight so much agraste‡
 That she him taught celestial discipline,
 And opened his dull eyes, that light might in them shine.

* *Gest*, deed, exploit. † *Aredd*, understood. ‡ *Agraste*, favor'd.

XIX.

And that her sacred book, with blood ywrit,*
That none could read except she did them teach,
She unto him disclosed every whit;
And heavenly documents thereout did preach,
That weaker wit of man could never reach;
Of God; of Grace; of Justice; of Free-will;
That wonder was to hear her goodly speech:
For she was able with her words to kill,
And raise again to life the heart that she did thrill.

XX.

And, when she list pour out her larger spright,
She would command the hasty sun to stay,
Or backward turn his course from heaven's height:
Sometimes great hosts of men she could dismay;
Dry-shod to pass she parts the floods in tway,†
And eke huge mountains from their native seat
She would command themselves to bear away,
And throw in raging sea with roaring threat:
Almighty God her gave such power and puissance great.

XXI.

The faithful knight now grew in little space,
By hearing her, and by her sisters' lore,
To such perfection of all heavenly grace,
That wretched world he gan for to abhor,
And mortal life gan loath as thing forlore,
Griev'd with remembrance of his wicked ways,
And prick'd with anguish of his sins so sore,
That he desir'd to end his wretched days:
So much the dart of sinful guilt the soul dismays!

* *Ywrit*, written.† *Tway*, two.

XXII.

But wise Speranza gave him comfort sweet,
And taught him how to take assured hold
Upon her silver anchor, as was meet ;
Else had his sins so great and manifold
Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
In this distressed doubtful agony,
When him his dearest Una did behold
Disdaining life, desiring leave to die,
She found her self assail'd with great perplexity ;

XXIII.

And came to Cælia to declare her smart ;
Who well acquainted with that common plight,
Which sinful horror works in wounded heart,
Her wisely comforted all that she might,
With goodly counsel and advisement right ;
And straightway sent with careful diligence,
To fetch a leech, the which had great insight
In that disease of grieved conscience,
And well could cure the same ; his name was Patience.

XXIV.

Who, coming to that soul-diseased knight,
Could hardly him intreat to tell his grief :
Which known, and all, that 'noyd his heavie spright,
Well search'd, eftsoones he gan apply relief
Of salves and med'cines, which had passing prief ;
And thereto added words of wondrous might :
By which to ease he him recured brief,
And much assuag'd the passion of his plight,
That he his pain endur'd, as seeming now more light.

XXV.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
Inward corruption and infected sin,
Not purg'd nor heal'd, behind remained still,
And festering sore did rankle yet within,
Close creeping twixt the marrow and the skin :
Which to extirp, he laid him privily
Down in a darksome lowly place far in,
Whereas he meant his cōrrosives to apply,
And with straight diet tame his stubborn malady.

XXVI.

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
His dainty corse, proud humors to abate ;
And dieted with fasting every day,
The swelling of his wounds to mitigate ;
And made him pray both early and eke late :
And ever, as superfluous flesh did rot,
Amendment ready still at hand did wait
To pluck it out with pincers fiery hot
That soon in him was left no one corrupted jot.

XXVII.

And bitter Penance, with an iron whip,
Was wont him once to disple* every day :
And sharp remorse his heart did prick and nip,
That drops of blood thence like a well did play :
And sad Repentance used to embay
His body in salt water smarting sore,
The filthy blots of sin to wash away,
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but erst lay at death's door.

* *Disple*, discipline.

XXVIII.

In which his torment often was so great,
That, like a lion, he would cry and roar ;
And rend his flesh ; and his own sinews eat.
His own dear Una, hearing evermore
His rueful shrieks and groanings, often tore
Her guiltless garments and her golden hair
For pity of his pain and anguish sore :
Yet all with patience wisely she did bear ;
For well she wist his crime could else be never clear.

XXIX.

Whom, thus recovered by wise Patience
And true Repentance, they to Una brought ;
Who, joyous of his cured conscience,
Him dearly kist, and fairly eke besought
Himself to cherish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his careful breast.
By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought,
Was woxen* strong, and left her fruitful nest :
To her fair Una brought this unacquainted guest.

XXX.

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easy to compare ;
Full of great love ; but Cupid's wanton snare
As hell she hated ; chaste in work and will ;
Her neck and breasts were ever open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might suck their fill ;
The rest was all in yellow robes arrayed still.

* *Woxen*, become.

XXXI.

A multitude of babes about her hung,
Playing their sports, that joy'd her to behold ;
Whom still she fed, whiles they were weak and young,
But thrust them forth still as they waxed old :
And on her head she wore a tyre of gold,
Adorn'd with gems and owches wondrous fair,
Whose passing price uneath was to be told :
And by her side there sat a gentle pair
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an ivory chair.

XXXII.

The knight and Una ent'ring fair her greet,
And bid her joy of that her happy brood ;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,
And entertains with friendly cheerful mood.
Then Una her besought, to be so good
As in her virtuous rules to school her knight,
Now after all his torment well withstood
In that sad house of Penance, where his spright
Had past the pains of hell and long-enduring night.

XXXIII.

She was right joyous of her just request ;
And, taking by the hand that faëry's son,
Gan him instruct in every good behest,
Of love ; and righteousness ; and well to donne,*
And wrath and hatred warëly to shun,
That drew on men God's hatred and his wrath,
And many souls in dolours had foredone :
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path.

* *Donne*, do.

XXXIV.

Wherein his weaker wand'ring steps to guide,
An ancient matron she to her does call,
Whose sober looks her wisdom well descry'd :
Her name was Mercy ; well known over all
To be both gracious and eke liberal :
To whom the careful charge of him she gave,
To lead aright, that he should never fall
In all his ways through this wide worldës wave ;
That Mercy in the end his righteous soul might save.

XXXV.

The godly matron by the hand him bears
Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
Scattered with bushy thorns and ragged breares*
Which still before him she remov'd away,
That nothing might his ready passage stay :
And ever when his feet encumber'd were,
Or gan to shrink, or from the right to stray,
She held him fast, and firmly did upbear ;
As careful nurse her child from falling oft does rear.

XXXVI.

Eftsoones unto an holy hospital,
That was foreby the way, she did him bring ;
In which seven bead-men, that had vowed all
Their life to service of high heaven's king,
Did spend their days in doing godly thing :
Their gates to all were open evermore,
That by the weary way were travelling ;
And one sate waiting ever them before,
To call in comers by, that needy were and poor.

* *Breares*, briars.

XXXVII.

The first of them, that eldest was and best,
Of all the house had charge and government,
As guardian and steward of the rest :
His office was to give entertainmént
And lodging unto all that came and went ;
Not unto such as could him feast again,
And double quit* for that he on them spent ;
But such, as want of harbor did constrain :
Those for God's sake his duty was to entertain.

XXXVIII.

The second was an alm'ner of the place.
His office was the hungry for to feed,
And thirsty give to drink ; a work of grace :
He fear'd not once himself to be in need,
Nor car'd to hoard for those whom he did breed :
The grace of God he laid up still in store,
Which as a stock he left unto his seed :
He had enough ; what need him care for more ?
And had he less, yet some he would give to the poor.

XXXIX.

The third had of their wardrobe custody,
In which were not rich tyres, nor garments gay,
The plumes of pride, and wings of vanity,
But clothës meet to keep keen cold away,
And naked nature seemly to array ;
With which bare wretched wights he daily clad,
The images of God in earthly clay ;
And, if that no spare clothes to give he had,
His own coat he would cut, and it distribute glad.

* *Quit*, repay.

XL.

The fourth appointed by his office was
Poor prisoners to relieve with gracious aid,
And captives to redeem with price of brass
From Turks and Saracens, which them had stay'd ;
And though they faulty were, yet well he weigh'd,
That God to us forgiveth every hour
Much more than that why they in bands were laid ;
And he, that harrow'd hell with heavy stowre,
The faulty souls from thence brought to his heav'nly bower.

XLI.

The fifth had charge sick persons to attend,
And comfort those in point of death which lay ;
For them most needeth comfort in the end,
When Sin, and Hell, and Death do most dismay
The feeble soul departing hence away,
All is but lost, that living we bestow,
If not well ended at our dying day,
O man ! have mind of that last bitter throw ;
For as the tree does fall, so lies it ever low.

XLII.

The sixth had charge of them now being dead,
In seemly sort their corsers to engrave,*
And deck with dainty flowers their bridal bed,
That to their heavenly Spouse both sweet and brave
They might appear, when he their souls shall save.
The wondrous workmanship of God's own mould,
Whose face he made all beasts to fear, and gave
All in his hand, even dead we honor should.
Ah, dearest God, me grant, I dead be not defoul'd !

* *Engrave*, bury.

XLIII.

The seventh, now after death and burial done,
Had charge the tender orphans of the dead
And widows aid, lest they should be undone ;
In face of judgment he their rights would plead
Nor ought the power of mighty men did dread
In their defence ; nor would for gold or fee
Be won their rightful causes down to tread :
And, when they stood in most necessity,
He did supply their want, and gave them ever free.

XLIV.

There when the elfin knight arrived was,
The first and chiefest of the seven, whose care
Was guests to welcome, towards him did pass.
Where seeing Mercy, that his steps upbare
And always led, to her with reverence rare
He humbly louted* in meek lowliness,
And seemly welcome for her did prepare :
For of their order she was patroness,
Albeit Charissa were their chiefest foundress.

XLV.

There she awhile him stays, himself to rest,
That to the rest more able he might be,
During which time, in every good behest,
And godly work of alms and charity,
She him instructed with great industry.
Shortly therein so perfect he became,
That, from the first unto the last degree,
His mortal life he learned had to frame
In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame.

* *Louted*, bowed.

XLVI.

Thence forward by that painful way they pass
Forth to an hill, that was both steep and high ;
On top whereof a sacred chapel was,
And eke a little hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
That day and night said his devotion,
Nor other worldly business did apply :
His name was Heaventy Contemplation ;
Of God and goodness, was his meditation.

XLVII.

Great grace that old man to him given had ;
For God he often saw from heaven's height :
All were his earthly eyes both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly sight,
Yet wondrous quick and piercing was his spright,
As eagles eye, that can behold the sun.
That hill they scale with all their power and might,
That his frail thighs, nigh weary and fordone,
Gan fail ; but, by her help, the top at last he won.

XLVIII.

There they do find that godly aged sire,
With snowy locks adown his shoulders shed ;
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy branches of an oak half dead,
Each bone might through his body well be read,*
And every sinew seen, through his long fast :
For nought he car'd his carcass long unfed ;
His mind was full of spiritual repast,
And pin'd his flesh to keep his body low and chaste.

* *Read*, perceived.

XLIX.

Who, when these two approaching he espied,
 At their first presence grew aggrieved sore,
 That forc'd him lay his heavenly thoughts aside,
 And had he not that dame respected more,
 Whom highly he did reverence and adore,
 He would not once have moved for the knight.
 They him saluted, standing far afore ;
 Who, well them greeting, humbly did requite,
 And asked, to what end they clomb that tedious height.

L.

“ What end,” quoth she, “ should cause us take such pain,
 But that same end, which every living wight
 Should make his mark, high heaven to attain ?
 Is not from hence the way, that leadeth right
 To that most glorious house, that glistereth bright
 With burning stars and ever living fire,
 Whereof the keys are to thy hand behight
 By wise Fidelia ? She doth thee require,
 To shew it to this knight, according his desire.”

LI.

“ Thrice happy man,” said then the father grave,
 “ Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth lead,
 And shows the way his sinful soul to save !
 Who better can the way to heaven aread*
 Than thou thyself, that was both born and bred
 In heavenly throne, where thousand angels shine ?
 Thou dost the prayers of the righteous seed
 Present before the Majesty Divine,
 And his avenging wrath to clemency incline.

* *Aread*, perceive or understand.

LII.

“ Yet, since thou bidst, thy pleasure shall be done.
Then come, thou man of earth, and see the way,
That never yet was seen of Faëry's son ;
That never leads the traveller astray,
But, after labors long and sad delay,
Brings them to joyous rest and endless bliss,
But first thou must a season fast and pray,
Till from her bands the spright assoiled is,
And have her strength recur'd from frail infirmities.”

LIII.

That done, he leads him to the highest mount ;
Such one, as that same mighty man of God,
That blood-red billows like a walled front
On either side disparted with his rod,
Till that his army dry-foot through them yode*
Dwelt forty days upon ; where, writ in stone
With bloody letters by the hand of God,
The bitter doom of death and baleful moan
He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him shone :

LIV.

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full high
Adorn'd with fruitful olives all around,
Is, as it were for endless memory
Of that dear Lord who oft thereon was found
For ever with a flow'ring garland crown'd ;
Or like that pleasant mount, that is for ay
Through famous poets' verse each where renown'd,
On which the thrice three learned ladies play,
Their heavenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay,

* *Yode*, travelled.

LV.

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
A little path, that was both steep and long,
Which to a goodly city led his view ;
Whose walls and towers were builded high and strong
Of pearl and precious stone, that earthly tongue
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell ;
Too high a ditty for my simple song !
The city of the Great King hight it well,*
Wherein eternal peace and happiness doth dwell.

LVI.

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed Angels to and fro descend
From highest heaven in gladsome company
And with great joy into that city wend,
As commonly as friend does with his friend.
Whereat he wond' red much, and gan enquire,
What stately building durst so high extend
Her lofty towers unto the starry sphere,
And what unknownen nation there empeopled were.

LVII.

“ Fair knight,” quoth he, “ Hierusalem that is,
The New Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt
With precious blood, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that unspotted Lamb
That for the sins of all the world was kilt ;
Now are they saints all in that city same
More dear unto their God than younglings to their dam.”

* *Hight it well*, it is well named.

LVIII.

“Till now,” said then the knight, “I weened well,
That great Cleopolis where I have been,
In which that fairest Faëry Queen doth dwell,
The fairest city was that might be seen ;
And that bright tower, all built of chrystal clean,
Panthea, seemed the brightest thing that was :
But now by proof all otherwise I ween ;
For this great city that does far surpass,
And this bright Angels’ tow’r quite dims that tow’r of glass.

LIX.

“Most true,” then said the holy aged man ;
“Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,
The fairest piece that eye beholden can ;
And well beseems all knights of noble name,
That covet in th’ immortal book of fame
To be etérnized, that same to haunt,
And do their service to that sovereign dame,
That glory does to them for guerdon grant :
For she is heavenly born, and heaven may justly vaunt.

LX.

“And thou, fair imp, sprung out from English race,
How ever now accounted Elfin’s son,
Well worthy doest thy service for her grace,
To aid a virgin desolate fordone.
But when thou famous victory hast won,
And high amongst all knights hast hung thy shield,
Thenceforth the suit of earthly conquest shun,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field :
For blood can nought but sin, and wars but sorrows yield.

LXI.

“ Then seek this path that I to thee preságe,
Which after all to heaven shall thee send ;
‘Then peaceably thy painful pilgrimage
To yonder same Hierusalem do bend,
Where is for thee ordain’d a blessed end :
For thou amongst those saints whom thou dost see,
Shalt be a saint, and thine own nation’s friend
And patron ; thou *Saint George* shalt called be,
Saint George of merry *Englánd*, the sign of victory.

LXII.

“ Unworthy wretch,” quoth he, “ of so great grace,
How dare I think such glory to attain !”
“ These, that have it attain’d, were in like case,”
Quoth he, “ as wretched, and liv’d in like pain.”
“ But deeds of arms must I at last be fain
And ladies’ love to leave, so dearly bought ?”
“ What need of arms, where peace doth ay remain,”
Said he, “ and battles none are to be fought ?
As for loose loves, they ’re vain, and vanish into nought.”

LXIII.

“ O let me not,” quoth he, “ then turn again
Back to the world, whose joys so fruitless are ;
But let me here for aye in peace remain,
Or straightway on that last long voyage fare,
That nothing may my present hope impair.”
“ That may not be,” said he, “ nor mayst thou yet
Forget that royal maid’s bequeathed care,
Who did her cause into thy hand commit,
Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quit.”

LXIV.

“Then shall I soon,” quoth he, “so God me grace,
Abet that virgin’s cause disconsolate,
And shortly back return unto this place,
To walk this way in pilgrim’s poor estate.
But now aread,* old father, why of late
Didst thou behight† me born of English blood,
Whom all a Faëries son do nominate?”
“That word shall I,” quoth he, “avouchen good,
Since to thee is unknown the cradle of thy brood.

LXV.

“For well I wot thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kings, that have with mighty hand,
And many bloody battles fought in place,
High rear’d their royal throne in Britain land,
And vanquish’d them, unable to withstand:
From thence a Faëry thee unweeting reft,
There as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left:
Such, men do changelings call, so chang’d by Faëries theft.

LXVI.

“Thence she thee brought into this Faëry land,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hide;
Where thee a ploughman all unweeting found,
As he his toilsome team that way did guide,
And brought thee up in ploughman’s state to bide,
Whereof Gëorgos he thee gave to name;
Till prick’d with courage, and thy force’s pride,
To Faëry court thou can’st to seek for fame,
And prove thy puissant arms, as seems thee best became.”

* *Aread*, explain.† *Behight*, call.

LXVII.

“O holy sire,” quoth he, “how shall I quite*
The many favors I with thee have found,
That hast my name and nation read aright,
And taught the way that does to heaven bound !”
This said, adown he looked to the ground
To have returned, but dazed were his eyne
Through passing brightness which did quite confound
His feeble sense, and too exceeding shine.
So dark are earthly things compar’d to things divine !

LXVIII.

At last, whenas himself he gan to find,
To Una back he cast him to retire ;
Who him awaited still with pensive mind.
Great thanks, and goodly meed, to that good sire
He thence departing gave for his pains’ hire.
So came to Una, who him joy’d to see ;
And, after little rest, gan him desire
Of her adventure mindful for to be.
So leave they take of Cælia and her daughters three.

* *Quite*, repay.

CANTO XI.

The knight with that old dragon fights
Two days incessantly :
The third him overthrows ; and gains
Most glorious victory.

I.

HIGH time now 'gan it wax for Una fair
To think of those her captive parents dear,
And their forwasted kingdom to repair :
Where to whenas they now approached near,
With hearty words her knight she gan to cheer,
And in her modest manner thus bespake ;
“ Dear knight, as dear as ever knight was dear,
That all these sorrows suffer for my sake,
High heaven behold the tedious toil, ye for me take !

II.

“ Now are we come unto my native soil,
And to the place where all our perils dwell ;
Here haunts that fiend, and does his daily spoil ;
Therefore henceforth be at your keeping well,
And ever ready for your foeman fell :
That spark of noble courage now awake,
And strive your excellent self to excel ;
That shall ye evermore renowned make
Above all knights on earth, that battle undertake.”

III.

And pointing forth, "Lo! yonder is," said she,
"The brazen towre, in which my parents dear,
For dread of that huge fiend emprison'd be ;
Whom I from far see on the walls appear,
Whose sight my feeble soul doth greatly cheer,
And on the top of all I do espy
The watchman waiting tidings glad to hear,
That, O my parents, might I happily
Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery !"

IV.

With that they heard a roaring hideous sound,
That all the air with terror filled wide,
And seem'd uneath to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoons that dreadful dragon they espied,
Where stretch'd he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himself like a great hill :
But, all so soon as he from far descry'd
Those glistring arms that heaven with light did fill,
He rous'd himself full blithe, and hastened them until.

V.

Then bade the knight his lady yode* aloof,
And to an hill herself withdraw aside :
From whence she might behold that battle's proof,
And eke be safe from danger far descry'd :
She him obey'd, and turned a little wide.—
Now, O thou sacred Muse, most learned dame,
Fair imp of Phœbus and his aged bride,
The nurse of time and everlasting fame,
That warlike hands ennoblest with immortal name ;

* *Yode*, go.

VI.

O, gently come into my feeble breast,
Come gently ; but not with that mighty rage,
Wherewith the martial troops thou dost infest,
And hearts of great heroës dost enrage,
That nought their kindled courage may assuage :
Soon as thy dreadful trump begins to sound,
The god of war with his fierce equipage
Thou dost awake, sleep never he so sound ;
And scared nations dost with horror stern astound.

VII.

Fair goddess, lay that furious fit aside,
Till I of war and bloody Mars do sing,
And Briton fields with Saracen blood bedy'd,
Twixt that great Faëry Queen, and Paynim king,
That with their horror heaven and earth did ring ;
A work of labor long and endless praise :
But now a while let down that haughty string
And to my tunes thy second tenor raise,
That I this man of God his godly arms may blaze.

VIII.

By this, the dreadful beast drew nigh to hand,
Half flying and half footing in his haste,
That with his largeness measured much land,
And made wide shadow under his huge waste ;
As mountain doth the valley overcast.
Approaching nigh, he reared high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vast ;
Which, to increase his wondrous greatness more,
Was swoln with wrath and poison, and with bloody gore ;

IX.

And over all with brazen scales was arm'd,
 Like plated coat of steel, so couched near
 That nought might pierce ; nor might his corse be harm'd
 With dint of sword, nor push of pointed spear :
 Which, as an eagle, seeing prey appear,
 His aery plumes doth rouse full rudely dight ;
 So shaked he, that horror was to hear :
 For, as the clashing of an armor bright,
 Such noise his roused scales did send unto the knight.

X.

His flaggy wings, when forth he did display,
 Were like two sails, in which the hollow wind
 Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way :*
 And eke the pens, that did his pinions bind,
 Were like main-yards with flying canvas lin'd ;
 With which whenas him list the air to beat,
 And there by force unwonted passage find,
 The clouds before him fled for terror great,
 And all the heavens stood still amazed with this threat.

XI.

His huge long tail wound up in hundred folds,
 Does overspread his long brass-sealy back,
 Whose wreathed boughts† whenever he unfolds,
 And thick-entangled knots adown does slack,

* So Milton :

His *sail-broad* vans
 He spreads for flight——

Par. Lost, Book ii.

† *Boughts*, twists.

Bespotted as with shields of red and black,
 It sweepeth all the land behind him far,
 And of three furlongs does but little lack ;*
 And at the point two stings infixed are,
 Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steel exceeden far.

XII.

But stings and sharpest steel did far exceed *a*
 The sharpness of his cruel rending claws : *r*
 Dead was it sure, as sure as death indeed, *a*
 What ever thing does touch his ravenous paws, *r*
 Or what within his reach he ever draws. *r*
 But his most hideous head my tongue to tell *c*
 Does tremble ; for his deep devouring jaws *r*
 Wide gaped, like the grisly mouth of hell, *c*
 Through which into his dark abyss all ravin fell. *c*

XIII.

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw
 Three ranks of iron teeth enranged were,
 In which yet trickling blood, and gobbets raw,
 Of late devoured bodies did appear ;
 That sight thereof bred cold congealed fear :
 Which to increase, and all at once to kill,
 A cloud of smothering smoke, and sulphur sear
 Out of his stinking gorge forth steamed still,
 That all the air about with smoke and stench did fill.

* Milton again :

His other parts besides
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large
 Lay floating *many a rood*——

Par. Lost, Book i.

XIV.

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields,
Did burn with wrath, and sparkled living fire :
As two broad beacons, set in open fields,
Sent forth their flames far off to every shire,
And warning give, that enemies conspire
With fire and sword the region to invade ;
So flam'd his eyes with rage and rancorous ire :
But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lamps were set, that made a dreadful shade.

XV.

So dreadfully he towards him did pass,
Forelifting up aloft his speckled breast,
And often bounding on the bruised grass,
As for great joyance of his new come guest.
Eftsoons he gan advance his haughty crest ;
As chafed boar his bristles doth uprear ;
And shook his scales to battle ready drest
(That made the Redcross knight nigh quake for fear),
As bidding bold defiance to his foemen near.

XVI.

The knight gan fairly couch his steady spear,
And fiercely ran at him with rigorous might :
The pointed steel, arriving rudely there,
His harder hide would neither pierce nor bite,
But, glancing by, forth passed forward right :
Yet, sore amov'd with so püissant push,
The wrathful beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
With his long tail that horse and man to ground did rush.

XVII.

Both horse and man up lightly rose again,
And fresh encounter towards him addrest ;
But th' idle stroke yet back recoil'd in vain,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
To be avenged of so great despite ;
For never felt his impierceable breast
So wondrous force from hand of living wight :
Yet had he prov'd the power of many a puissant knight.

XVIII.

Then, with his waving wings displayed wide,
Himself up high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly divide
The yielding air, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To bear so great a weight : He, cutting way
With his broad sails, about him soared round ;
At last, low stooping with unwieldy sway,
Snatch'd up both horse and man, to bear them quite away.

XIX.

Long he them bore above the subject plain,
So far as ewen bow a shaft may send ;
Till struggling strong did him at last constrain
To let them down before his flight's end :
As haggard hawk, presuming to contend
With hardy fowl above his able might,
His weary pounces all in vain doth spend
To truss the prey too heavy for his flight ;
Which, coming down to ground, does free itself by flight.

XX.

He so disseized of his griping gross,
The knight his thrillant spear again assay'd
In his brass-plated body to emboss,
And three men's strength unto the stroke he laid ;
Wherewith the stiff beam quaked, as afraid,
And glancing from his scaly neck did glide
Close under his left wing, then broad display'd :
The piercing steel there wrought a wound full wide,
That with the uncouth smart the monster loudly cried.

XXI.

He cried, as raging seas are wont to roar,
When wintry storm his wrathful wreck does threat ;
The rolling billows beat the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat ;
And greedy gulf does gape, as he would eat
His neighbor element in his revenge :
Then gin the blustering brethren boldly threat
To move the world from off his stedfast henge,
And boist'rous battle make, each other to avenge.

XXII.

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh
Till with his cruel claws he snatch'd the wood,
And quite asunder broke : forth flowed fresh
A gushing river of black gory blood,
That drowned all the land, whereon he stood ;
The stream thereof would drive a water-mill :
Trebly augmented was his furious mood
With bitter sense of his deep rooted ill,
That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nostril.

XXIII.

His hideous tail then hurled he about,
 And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thighs
 Of his froth-foamy steed, whose courage stout
 Striving to loose the knot that fast him ties,
 Himself in straighter bands too rash implies,
 That to the ground he is perforce constrain'd
 To throw his rider ; who can quickly rise
 From off the earth, with dirty blood distain'd,
 For that reproachful fall right foully he disdain'd ;

XXIV.

And fiercely took his trenchard blade in hand,
 With which he struck so furious and so fell,
 That nothing seem'd the puissance could withstand :
 Upon his crest the harden'd iron fell ;
 But his more hardened crest was arm'd so well,
 That deeper dint therein it would not make ;
 Yet so extremely did the buff him quell,
 That from thenceforth he shunn'd the like to take,
 But, when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

XXV.

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguil'd,
 And smote again with more outrageous might,
 But back again the sparkling steel recoil'd,
 And left not any mark where it did light,
 As if in adamant rock it had been pight.*
 The beast, impatient of his smarting wound
 And of so fierce and forcible despight,
 Thought with his wings to stye† above the ground ;
 But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

* *Pight*, struck.† *Stye*, to rise.

XXVI.

Then, full of grief and anguish vehement,
 He loudly bray'd, that like was never heard ;
 And from his wide devouring oven sent
 A flake of fire, that, flashing in his beard,
 Him all amaz'd, and almost made afear'd :
 The scorching flame sore singéd all his face,
 And through his armor all his body sear'd,
 That he could not endure so cruel case,
 But thought his arms to leave, and helmet to unlace.

XXVII.

Not that great champion of the ántique world,
 Whom famous poets' verse so much doth vaunt,
 And hath for twelve huge labors high extoll'd,
 So many furies and sharp fits did haunt,
 When him the poison'd garment did enchant,
 With Centaur's blood and bloody verses charm'd ;
 As did this knight twelve thousand dolours daunt,
 Whom fiery steel now burnt, that erst him arm'd ;
 That erst* him goodly arm'd, now most of all him harm'd.

XXVIII.

Faint, weary, sore, emboiled, grieved, brent,†
 With heat, toil, wounds, arms, smart, and inward fire
 That never man such mischiefs did torment ;
 Death better were ; death did he oft desire ;
 But death will never come, when needs require.
 Whom so dismay'd when that his foe beheld,
 He cast to suffer him no more respire,
 But gan his sturdy stern about to weld,
 And him so strongly struck, that to the ground him fell'd.

* *Erst*, formerly or before.

† *Brent*, burnt.

XXIX.

It fortunéd (as fair it then befel),
 Behind his back, unweeting where he stood,
 Of ancient time there was a springing well,
 From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
 Full of great virtues, and for med'cine good :
 Whylome,* before that cursed dragon got
 That happy land, and all with innocent blood
 Defil'd those sacred waves, it rightly hot†
 The Well of Life ; nor yet his virtues had forgot :

XXX.

For unto life the dead it could restore,
 And guilt of sinful crimes clean wash away ;
 Those, that with sickness were infected sore,
 It could recure ; and aged long decay
 Renew, as one were born that very day.
 Both Silo‡ this, and Jordan, did excel,
 And th' English Bath, and eke the German Spa ;
 Nor can Cephise, nor Hebrus, match this well :
 Into the same the knight back overthrown fell.

XXXI.

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steep
 His fiery face in billows of the west,
 And his faint steeds water'd in ocean deep,
 Whiles from their journal labors they did rest ;
 When that infernal monster, having kest§
 His weary foe into that living well,
 Gan high advance his broad discolor'd breast
 Above his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
 And clapt his iron wings, as victor he did dwell

* *Whylome*, formerly.† *Hot*, for *hight*,—was called.‡ *Silo*, *Siloam*.§ *Kest*, cast.

XXXII.

Which when his pensive lady saw from far,
Great woe and sorrow did her soul assay,
As weening that the sad end of the war ;
And gan to highest God entirely pray
That feared chance from her to turn away :
With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,
All night she watch'd ; nor once adown would lay
Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,*
But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

XXXIII.

The morrow next gan early to appear,
That Titan rose to run his daily race ;
But early, ere the morrow next gan rear
Out of the sea fair Titan's dewy face,
Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy
Her loved knight to move his manly pace :
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

XXXIV.

At last she saw, where he upstarted brave
Out of the well wherein he drenched lay :
As eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,
And deck'd himself with feathers youthly gay,
Like eyas hawk upmounts unto the skies,
His newly-budded pinions to assay,
And marvels at himself, still as he flies :
So new this new-born knight to battle new did rise.

* *Dreriment*, distress.

XXXV.

Whom when the damned fiend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wonder'd at the sight,
And doubted whether his late enemy
It were, or other new supplied knight.
He now, to prove his late-renewed might,
High brandishing his bright dew-burning blade,
Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made :
The deadly dint his dulled senses all dismay'd.

XXXVI.

I wot not, whether the revenging steel
Were harden'd with that holy water dew
Wherein he fell ; or sharper edge did feel ;
Or his baptized hands now greater grew ;
Or other secret virtue did ensue ;
Else never could the force of fleshly arm,
Nor molten metal, in his blood embrue :
For, till that stound,* could never wight him harm
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charm.

XXXVII.

The cruel wound enraged him so sore,
That loud he yelléd for exceeding pain ;
As hundred ramping lions seem'd to roar,
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constrain.
Then gan he toss aloft his stretched train,
And therewith scourge the buxom air so sore,
That to his force to yielde it was fain ;
Nor ought his sturdy strokes might stand afore,
That high trees overthrew, and rocks in pieces tore :

* *Stound*, blow.

XXXVIII.

The same advancing high above his head,
 With sharp intended sting so rude him smote,
 That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead ;
 No living wight would have him life behott :*
 The mortal sting his angry needle shot
 Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seiz'd,
 Where fast it stuck, nor would thereout be got :
 The grief thereof him wondrous sore diseas'd,
 Nor might his rankling pain with patience be appeas'd.

XXXIX.

But yet, more mindful of his honor dear
 Than of the grievous smart which him did wring,
 From loathed soil he can him lightly rear,
 And strove to loose the far infixéd sting :
 Which when in vain he tried with struggëling.
 Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he heft,
 And struck so strongly, that the knotty string
 Of his huge tail he quite asunder cleft ;
 Five joints thereof he hew'd, and but the stump him left.

XL.

Heart cannot think, what outrage and what cries,
 With foul enfoulder'd† smoke and flashing fire,
 The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,
 That all was covered with darkness dire :
 Then fraught with rancor, and engorged ire,
 He cast at once him to avenge for all ;
 And, gathering up himself out of the mire
 With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
 Upon his sun-bright shield, and grip'd it fast withal.

* Would have supposed him to be alive.

† *Enfoulder'd*, thick.

XLI.

Much was the man encumber'd with his hold,
 In fear to lose his weapon in his paw,
 Nor wist yet, how his talons to unfold ;
 Nor harder was from Cerberus' greedy jaw
 To pluck a bone, than from his cruel claw
 To reave by strength the griped gage away :
 Thrice he assay'd it from his foot to draw,
 And thrice in vain to draw it did assay ;
 It bootéd nought to think to rob him of his prey.

XLII.

'Then when he saw no power might prevail,
 His trusty sword he call'd to his last aid,
 Wherewith he fiercely did his foe assail,
 And double blows about him stoutly laid,
 That glancing fire out of the iron play'd ;
 As sparkles from the anvil use to fly,
 When heavy hammers on the wedge are sway'd ;
 Therewith at last he forc'd him to untie
 One of his grasping feet, him to defend thereby.

XLIII.

The other foot, fast fixed on his shield,
 Whenas no strength nor stroke might him constrain
 To loose, nor yet the warlike pledge to yield ;
 He smote thereat with all his might and main,
 That nought so wondrous puissance might sustain :
 Upon the joint the lucky steel did light,
 And made such way, that hew'd it quite in twain ;
 The paw yet missed not his minish'd might,*
 But hung still on the shield, as it at first was pight.†

* *Minisht*, diminish'd.† *Pight*, put.

XLIV.

For grief thereof and devilish despite,
From his infernal furnace forth he threw,
Huge flames, that dimmed all the heaven's light,
Enrol'd in duskish smoke and brimstone blue :
As burning Etna from his boiling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rocks in pieces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountains molten new,
Enwrap'd in coal black clouds and filthy smoke,
That all the land with stench, and heaven with horror choke.

XLV.

The heat whereof, and harmful pestilence,
So sore him 'noy'd, that forc'd him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrails did expire,
It chanc'd (Eternal God that chance did guide),
As he recoiled backward, in the mire
His nigh forwearied feeble feet did slide,
And down he fell, with dread of shame sore terrified.

XLVI.

There grew a goodly tree him fair beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy red,
As they in pure vermilion had been dyed,
Whereof great virtues over all were redd :*
For happy life to all which thereon fed,
And life eke everlasting did befall :
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd †
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The Tree of Life, the crime of our first father's fall.

* *Redd*, told.† *Stedd*, place.

XLVII.

In all the world like was not to be found,
Save in that soil, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprung out of the fruitful ground,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dread dragon all did overthrow.
Another like fair tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoons did know
Both good and ill : O mournful memory
That tree through one man's fault hath doen* us all to die.

XLVIII.

From that first tree forth flow'd, as from a well,
A trickling stream of balm, most sovereign
And dainty dear, which on the ground still fell,
And overflowed all the fertile plain,
As it had dewed been with timely rain :
Life and long health that gracious ointment gave ;
And deadly wounds could heal ; and rear again
The senseless corse appointed for the grave ;
Into that same he fell, which did from death him save.

XLIX

For nigh thereto the ever-damned beast
Durst not approach, for he was deadly made,
And all that life preservéd did detest ;
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drooping Day-light gan to fade,
And yield his room to sad succeeding Night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth and ways of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

* *Doen*, caused.

L.

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her dear knight, who, weary of long fight
And faint through loss of blood, mov'd not at all,
But lay, as in a dream of deep delight,
Besmear'd with precious balm, whose virtuous might
Did heal his wounds, and scorching heat allay ;
Again she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safety gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous* night, and wait for joyous day.

LI.

The joyous day 'gan early to appear ;
And fair Aurora from the dewy bed
Of aged Tithon gan herself to rear
With rosy cheeks, for shame as blushing red.
Her golden locks, for haste were loosely shed
About her ears, when Una did her mark
Climb to her chariot, all with flowers spread,
From heaven high to chase the cheerless dark ;
With merry note her loud salutes the mountain lark.

LII.

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himself to battle ready dight ;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devour'd, so soon as day he spied,
When now he saw himself so freshly rear,
As if late fight had nought him damnified,
He wox dismay'd, and 'gan his fate to fear ;
Nathless with wonted rage he him advanced near ;

* *Noyous*, hurtful.

LIII.

And in his first encounter, gaping wide,
He thought at once him to have swallow'd quite,
And rush'd upon him with outrageous pride ;
Who him rencounting fierce as hawk in flight,
Perforce rebutted back : the weapon bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so impórtune might,
That deep impierc'd his darksome hollow maw,
And, back retir'd, his life blood forth withal did draw.

LIV.

So down he fell, and forth his life did breathe,
That vanish'd into smoke and cloudes swift ;
So down he fell, that th' earth him underneath
Did groan, as feeble so great load to lift ;
So down he fell, as an huge rocky clift,
Whose false foundation waves have wash'd away,
With dreadful poise is from the mainland rift,
And, rolling down, great Neptune doth dismay :
So down he fell, and like an heaped mountain lay.

LV.

The knight himself ev'n trembled at his fall
So huge and horrible a mass it seem'd ;
And his dear lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread which she misdeem'd ;
But yet at last, whenas the direful fiend
She saw not stir, off-shaking vain affright
She nigher drew and saw that joyous end :
Then God she prais'd, and thank'd her faithful knight,
That had achiev'd so great a conquest by his might.

CANTO XII.

Fair Una to the Redcross knight
 Betrothed is with joy :
 Though false Duessa, it to bar,
 Her false slights doth employ.

I.

BEHOLD I see the haven nigh at hand,
 To which I mean my weary course to bend ;
Veer the main sheet, and bear up with the land,
 The which afore is fairly to be ken'd,
 And seemeth safe from storms that may offend :
 There this fair virgin weary of her way
 Must landed be, now at her journey's end ;
 There eke my feeble bark a while may stay,
 Till merry wind and weather call her thence away.

II.

Scarcely had Phœbus in the glooming* east
 Yet harnessed his fiery-footed team,
 Nor rear'd above the earth his flaming crest ;
 When the last deadly smoke aloft did steam,
 That sign of last outbreathed life did seem
 Unto the watchman on the castle-wall,
 Who thereby dead that baleful beast did deem,
 And to his lord and lady loud gan call,
 To tell how he had seen the dragon's fatal fall.

* This is apparently the Scotch word for twilight—*gloaming*

III.

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
That aged sire, the lord of all that land,
And looked forth, to weet if true indeed
Those tidings were, as he did understand :
Which whenas true by trial he outfound,
He bade to open wide his brazen gate,
Which long time had been shut, and out of hond*
Proclaimed joy and peace through all his state ;
For dead was now their foe, which them forrayed late.

IV.

Then gan triumphant trumpets sound on high,
That sent to heaven the echoed report
Of their new joy, and happy victory
Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort,†
And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
Then all the people, as in solemn feast,
To him assembled with one full consórt,
Rejoicing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternal bondage now they were releast.

V.

Forth came that ancient lord, and aged queen,
Array'd in antique robes down to the ground,
And sad habiliments right well beseen :
A noble crew about them waited round
Of sage and sober peers, all gravely gown'd ;
Whom far before did march a goodly band
Of tall young men, all able arms to sound,
But now they laurel branches bore in hand ;
Glad sign of victory and peace in all their land.

* *Hond*, "out of hand," is, in our day at least, a Hibernicism.

† *Tort* (Fr.), wrong.

VI.

Unto that doughty conqueror they came,
And, him before themselves prostrating low,
Their lord and patron loud did him proclaim,
And at his feet their laurel boughs did throw.
Soon after them, all dancing on a row,
The comely virgins came, with garlands dight,*
As fresh as flowers in meadow green do grow,
When morning dew upon their leaves doth light ;
And in their hands sweet timbrels all upheld on hight.

VII.

And, them before, the fry of children young
Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,
And to the maidens sounding timbrels sung
In well attuned notes a joyous lay,
And made delightful music all the way,
Until they came, where that fair Virgin stood :
As fair Diana in fresh summer's day
Beholds her nymphs enrang'd in shady wood,
Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in chrystal flood :

VIII.

So she beheld those maidens' merriment
With cheerful view ; who, when to her they came,
Themselves to ground with gracious humbless* bent,
And her ador'd by honorable name,
Lifting to heaven her everlasting fame :
Then on her head they set a garland green,
And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game
Who, in her self-resemblance well beseen,
Did seem, such as she was, a goodly maiden queen.

* *Dight*, deck'd.* *Humbless*, humility.

IX.

And after all the rascal many ran,
Heaped together in rude rabblement,
To see the face of that victorious man,
Whom all admired as from heaven sent,
And gaz'd upon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came where that dead dragon lay,
Stretch'd on the ground in monstrous large extent,
The sight with idle fear did them dismay,
Nor durst approach him nigh, to touch, or once assay.

X.

Some fear'd, and fled ; some fear'd, and well it feign'd ;
One, that would wiser seem than all the rest,
Warn'd him not touch, for yet perhaps remain'd
Some ling'ring life within his hollow breast,
Or in his womb might lurk some hidden nest
Of many dragonets, his fruitful seed ;
Another said, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparkling fire, and bade thereof take heed ;
Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed.

XI.

One mother, whenas her foolhardy child
Did come too near, and with his talons play,
Half dead through fear, her little babe revil'd,
And to her gossips gan in counsel say ;
“ How can I tell, but that his talons may
Yet scratch my son, or rend his tender hand ? ”
So diversely themselves in vain they fray ;
Whiles some more bold to measure him nigh stand,
To prove how many acres he did spread of land.

XII.

Thus flocked all the folk him round about ;
The whiles that hoary king, with all his train,
Being arrived where that champion stout
After his foes defeasance did remain,
Him goodly greets, and fair does entertain
With princely gifts of ivory and gold,
And thousand thanks him yields for all his pain.
Then when his daughter dear he does behold,
Her dearly doth embrace, and kisseth manifold.

XIII.

And after to his palace he them brings,
With shawms, and trumpets, and with clarions sweet ;
And all the way the joyous people sings,
And with their garments strows the paved street ;
Whence mounting up, they find purveyance meet
Of all, that royal prince's court became ;
And all the floor was underneath their feet
Bespread with costly scarlet of great name,
On which they lowly sit, and fitting purpose frame.

XIV.

What needs me tell their feast and goodly guise,
In which was nothing riotous nor vain ?
What needs of dainty dishes to devise,
Of comely services, or courtly train.
My narrow leaves cannot in them contain
The large discourse of royal princes' state.
Yet was their manner then but bare and plain ;
For th' antique world excess and pride did hate
Such proud luxurious pomp is swollen up but late.

XV.

Then, when with meats and drinks of every kind
Their fervent appetite they quenched had,
That ancient lord gan fit occasion find,
Of strange adventures, and of perils sad
Which in his travel him befallen had,
For to demand of his renowned guest :
Who then with utt'rance grave, and count'nance sad,
From point to point, as is before exprest,
Discours'd his voyage long, according his request.

XVI.

Great pleasure, mixt with pitiful regard,
That godly king and queen did passionate,
Whiles they his pitiful adventures heard ;
That oft they did lament his luckless state,
And often blame the too impórtune fate
That heap'd on him so many wrathful wrecks
(For never gentle knight, as he of late,
So tossed was in fortune's cruel freaks) ;
And all the while salt tears bedew'd the hearers' cheeks.

XVII.

Then said that royal pere* in sober wise ;
“ Dear son, great been the evils which ye bore
From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I no'te† whether praise or pity more ;
For never living man, I ween, so sore
In sea of deadly dangers was distrest :
But since now safe ye seized have the shore,
And well arrived are (high God be blest !)
Let us devise of ease and everlasting rest.”

* *Pere*, father.† *No'te*, know not.

XVIII.

"Ah, dearest lord," said then that doughty knight,
 "Of ease or rest I may not yet devise;
 For by the faith, which I to arms have plight,
 I bounden am straight after this emprise,
 As that your daughter can ye well advise,
 Back to return to that great Faëry Queen,
 And her to serve six years in warlike wise,
 Gainst that proud Paynim king that works her ^{harm} teen.*
 Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there have been."

XIX.

"Unhappy falls that hard necessity,"
 Quoth he, "the troubler of my happy peace,
 And vowed foe of my felicity;
 Nor I against the same can justly preace.†
 But since that band ye cannot now release,
 Nor done undo (for vows may not be vain),
 Soon as the term of those six years shall cease,
 Ye then shall hither back return again,
 The marriage to accomplish vow'd betwixt you twain:

XX.

"Which, for my part, I covet to perform,
 In sort as through the world I did proclaim,
 That whoso kill'd that monster most deform,
 And him in hardy battle overcame,
 Should have mine only daughter to his dame,
 And of my kingdom heir apparent be:
 Therefore since now to thee pertains the same,
 By due desert of noble chivalry,
 Both daughter and eke kingdom lo! I yield to thee."

* *Teen*, harm.

† *Preace*, press, or resist.

XXI.

Then forth he called that his daughter fair,
The fairest Un', his only daughter dear,
His only daughter and his only heir ;
Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheer,
As bright as doth the morning star appear
Out of the east, with flaming locks bedight,*
To tell that dawning day is drawing near,
And to the world does bring long-wished light
So fair and fresh that lady show'd herself in sight :

XXII.

So fair and fresh, as freshest flower in May ;
For she had laid her mournful stole aside,
And widow-like sad wimple thrown away,
Wherewith her heavenly beauty she did hide,
Whiles on her weary journey she did ride ;
And on her now a garment she did wear,
All lily white, withouten spot or pride,
'That seem'd like silk and silver woven near ;
But neither silk nor silver therein did appear.

XXIII.

The blazing brightness of her beauty's beam,
And glorious light of her sunshiny face,
To tell, were as to strive against the stream :
My ragged rhymes are all too rude and base
Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace.
No wonder ; for her own dear loved knight,
All were she daily with himself in place,
Did wonder much at her celestial sight :
Oft had he seen her fair, but never so fair dight.

* *Bedight*, decked.

XXIV.

So fairly dight when she in presence came,
She to her sire made humble reverence,
And bowed low, that her right well became,
And added grace unto her excellence :
Who with great wisdom and grave eloquence
Thus gan to say—But, ere he thus had said,
With flying speed, and seeming great pretence,
Came running in, much like a man dismay'd
A messenger, with letters which his message said.

XXV.

All in the open hall amazéd stood
At suddenness of that unwary sight,
And wonder'd at his breathless hasty mood :
But he for nought would stay his passage right,
Till fast before the king he did alight ;
Where falling flat great humbless he did make,
And kiss'd the ground whereon his foot was pight ;*
Then to his hands that writ he did betake,
Which he disclosing, read thus as the paper spake ;

XXVI.

“To thee, most mighty king of Eden fair,
Her greeting sends in these sad lines address
The woful daughter and forsaken heir
Of that great emperor of all the west ;
And bids thee be advised for the best,
Ere thou thy daughter link in holy band
Of wedlock, to that new unknownen guest :
For he already plighted his right hand
Unto another love, and to another land.

* *Pight*, placed.

XXVII.

"To me sad maid, or rather widow sad,
 He was affiancé long time before,
 And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
 False errant knight, infâmous, and forswore !
 Witness the burning altars, which he swore,
 And guilty heavens of his bold perjury ;
 Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
 Yet I to them for judgment just do fly,
 And them conjure t' avenge this shameful injury !

XXVIII.

"Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,
 Or false or true, or living or else dead,
 Withhold, O sovereign prince, your hasty hond
 From knitting league with him, I you aread ;
 Nor ween my right with strength adown to tread,
 Through weakness of my widowhood or woe ;
 For Truth is strong her rightful cause to plead,
 And shall find friends, if need requireth so.
 So bids thee well to fare, thy neither friend nor foe,
" *Fidessa.* "

XXIX.

When he these bitter biting words had read,
 The tidings strange did him abashéd make,
 That still he sate long time astonishéd,
 As in great muse, nor word to creature spake.
 At last his solemn silence thus he brake,
 With doubtful eyes fast fixed on his guest ;
 "Redoubted knight, that for mine only sake
 Thy life and honor late adventurst ;
 Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest

XXX.

“What mean these bloody vows and idle threats,
Thrown out from womanish impatient mind?
What heavens? what altars? what enraged heats,
Here heaped up with terms of love unkind,
My conscience clear with guilty bands would bind?
High God be witness, that I guiltless am;
But if yourself, sir knight, ye faulty find,
Or wrapped be in loves of former dame,
With crime do not it cover, but disclose the same.”

XXXI.

To whom the Redcross knight this answer sent;
“My lord, my king; be nought hereat dismay’d,
Till well ye wot by grave intendiment,
What woman, and wherefore, doth me upbraid
With breach of love and loyalty betrayed.
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately travel’d, that unwares I stray’d
Out of my way, through perils strange and hard;
That day should fail me ere I had them all declar’d.

XXXII.

“There did I find, or rather I was found
Of this false woman that Fidessa hight,
Fidessa hight the falsest dame on ground,
Most false Duessa, royal richly dight,
That easy was t’ inveigle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts and wily skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betray’d, when least I feared ill.”

XXXIII.

Then steppeth forth the goodly royal maid,
And on the ground herself prostrating low,
With sober countenance thus to him said ;
“ O pardon me, my sovereign lord, to show
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To have been wrought by that false sorceress :
She, only she, it is, that erst did throw
This gentle knight into so great distress,
That death him did await in daily wretchedness.

XXXIV.

“ And now it seems, that she suborned hath
This crafty messenger with letters vain,
To work new woe and unprovided scath,
By breaking of the band betwixt us twain ;
Wherein she used hath the practice pain
Of this false footman, klok'd with simpleness,
Whom if ye please for to discover plain,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I guess,
The falsest man alive ; who tries, shall find no less.”

XXXV.

The king was greatly moved at her speech ;
And, all with sudden indignation fraught,
Bade on that messenger rude hands to reach.
Eftsoons the guard, which on his state did wait,
Attach'd that faytor* false, and bound him strait :
Who seeming sorely chafed at his band,
As chained bear whom cruel dogs do bait,
With idle force did feign them to withstand ;
And often semblance made to scape out of their hand.

* *Faytor*, impostor.

XXXVI.

But they him laid full low in dungeon deep,
 And bound him hand and foot with iron chains :
 And with continual watch did warely keep.
 Who then would think, that by his subtle trains
 He could escape foul death or deadly pains ?
 Thus, when that prince's wrath was pacified,
 He gan renew the late forbidden bains,*
 And to the knight his daughter dear he tied
 With sacred rites and vows for ever to abide.

XXXVII.

His own two hands the holy knots did knit,
 That none but death for ever can divide ;
 His own two hands, for such a turn most fit,
 The housling† fire did kindle and provide,
 And holy water thereon sprinkled wide ;
 At which the bushy tead‡ a groom did light,
 And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
 Where it should not be quenched day nor night,
 For fear of evil fates, but burnen ever bright.

XXXVIII.

Then 'gan they sprinkle all the posts with wine,
 And made great feast to solemnize that day :
 They all perfumed with frankincense divine,
 And precious odors fetch'd from far away,
 That all the house did sweat with great array,
 And all the while sweet music did apply
 Her curious skill the warbling notes to play,
 To drive away the dull melánocholy ;
 The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

* *Bains*, banns.† *Housling*, sacrament.‡ *Tead*, a torch.

XXXIX.

During the which there was an heavenly noise
Heard sound through all the palace pleasantly,
Like as it had been many an angel's voice
Singing before th' Eternal Majesty,
In their trinál triplicities on high :
Yet wist no creature whence that heavenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly
Himself thereby reit of his senses meet,
And ravished with rare impression in his sprite.

XL.

Great joy was made that day of young and old,
And solemn feast proclaim'd throughout the land,
That their exceeding mirth may not be told :
Suffice it here by signs to understand
The usual joys at knitting of love's band.
Thrice happy man the knight himself did hold,
Possessed of his lady's heart and hand ;
And ever, when his eye did her behold,
His heart did seem to melt in pleasures manifold.

XLI.

Her joyous presence, and sweet company,
In full content he there did long enjoy ;
No wicked envy, ne vile jealousy,
His dear delights were able to annoy :
Yet, swimming in that sea of blissful joy,
He nought forgot how he whilome had sworn,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faëry Queen back to return ;
The which he shortly did ; and Una left to mourn.

XLII.

Now, strike your sails, ye jolly mariners,
For we be come unto a quiet road,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessel of her load.
Here she a while may make her safe abode,
Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
And wants supply'd; and then again abroad
On the long voyage whereto she is bent;
Well may she speed, and fairly finish her intent ! ✓

With these espousals, and the resolution of the Redcross Knight to quit his love and his happiness for a new field of duty—a resolution strictly in keeping with the practice of chivalric times—concludes the First Book of the Faëry Queen. Critics have decided that this Book, thus complete within itself, is the finest part of the great poem. In accordance with this generally received opinion, the same sentiment was advanced in the remarks which introduce this specimen. But a closer acquaintance with the whole, which has been the consequence of the present attempt, leads to some distrust as to the justness of this decision. It seems the result of a critical, rather than of a poetical, view of the poem: that is, the critic prizes a production in as far as it accords with rule, while the reader of taste judges of it, more generously, according to the effect which it produces on his imagination and his passions. With such a standard, there are many portions of the Faëry Queen which must be pronounced equal, if not superior, to the First Book; overflowing with imagery, action, and passion; luxuriant in description, and rich in emanations of that exalted moral significance which enhances even poetic merit. If the present volume should prove acceptable, another, which shall include some of the more splendid portions of the remainder of the poem, will follow. We shall conclude

our selections for the present with the Introductory stanzas which usher in Book II., curious and interesting to us, as referring to our country as a new world scarcely yet believed to be more than fabulous. Spenser pleasantly claims credence for his stories, on the ground that even this now certain discovery of a rich country beyond seas, was once thought to be but a wild fiction of some seething brain.



OPENING OF BOOK II., CONTAINING THE LEGEND OF SIR GUYON,
OR TEMPERANCE.

I.

RIGHT well I wot, most mighty sovereign,
That all this famous ántique history
Of some th' abundance of an idle brain
Will judged be, and painted forgery,
Rather than matter of just memory ;
Sith none that breatheth living air doth know
Where is that happy land of Faëry,
Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show ;
But vouch antiquities, which nobody can know.

II.

But let that man with better sense advise,
That of the world least part to us is red ;
And dâily how, through hardy enterprise,
Many great regions are discoveréd,
Which to late age were never mentioned ;
Who ever heard of the Indian Peru ?
Or who in venturous vessel measured
The Amazon huge river, now found true ?
Or fruitfulest Virginia who did ever view ?

III.

Yet all these were, when no man did them know,
Yet have from wisest ages hidden been ;
And later times things more unknown shall show
Why then should witless man so much misween,
That nothing is, but that which he hath seen ?
What, if within the moon's fair shining sphere,
What, if in every other star unseen
Of other worlds he happily should hear ?
He wonder would much more ; yet such to some appear.

IV.

Of Faëry land, yet if he more inquire,
By certain signs, here set in sundry place,
He may it find ; nor let him then admire,
But yield his sense to be too blunt and base,
That no'te without an hound fine footing trace.
And thou, O fairest princess under sky,
In this fair mirror may'st behold thy face,
And thine own realms in land of Faëry,
And in this antique image thy great ancestry.

V.

The which O ! pardon me thus to enfold
In covert veil, and wrap'd in shadows light,
That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
Which else could not endure those beamès bright,
But would be dazzled with exceeding light.
O ! pardon, and vouchsafe with patient ear
The brave adventures of this Faëry knight,
The good Sir Guyon, graciously to hear ;
In whom great rule of Temp'rance goodly doth appear.

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